Good Advice

TO THE

Church of England, Roman Catholicks and

Protestant Dissenters,

In which it is endeavoured to be made appear that it is their

Duty, Principles & Interest

To abolish the

Penal Laws and Tests.

Beati Pacifici.

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THE PREFACE.

Reader,

NO *matter* who, *but* what; *and yet if thou wouldst know the Author, he is an* Engliſh-Man, *and therefore obliged to this Country, and the Laws that made him Free.*

That ſingle Conſideration were enough to command this Undertaking; for 'tis to perſwade his Country Men to be delivered of the greateſt Yoke a Nation can well Suffer under; Penal Laws for Religion, *I mean.*

And

And now thou haſt, both the who, *and* what; *If thou art* Wiſe *and* Good, *thou art above my Epethites, and more my Flatteries; If not, I am in the Right to let 'um alone.* Read, Think *and* Judge. *Liberty,* Engliſh *and* Chriſtian, *is all that is ſought in the enſuing Diſcourſe.*

Adieu.

Good Advice, &c.

PART I.

I Muſt own, it is my Averſion at this time, to meddle with Publick Matters, and yet my Duty to the Publick will not let me be Silent. They that move by Principles muſt not regard *Times* nor *Factions*, but what is *juſt*, and what is *honourable*; and that no Man ought to Scruple, nor no Time nor Intereſt to Conteſt.

The ſingle Queſtion I go upon, and which does immediately concern and exerciſe the Minds of the Thinking, as well as Talking Men of this Kingdom, is, *whether it be fit to repeal the Penal Laws and Teſts, in matters of Religion, or not.* I take the Affirmative of the Queſtion, and humbly ſubmit my Reaſons to every reaſonable Conſcience. I ſay reaſonable, becauſe That which knows not its own Duty, Principles and Intereſt, is not ſo, and That which is not willing to do to others as it would be done by, leſs deſerves to be thought ſo.

Now there are three ſorts of People that will find themſelves concerned in this Queſtion; *The Church of England, the Roman Catholick*, and *the Proteſtant Diſſenter*, and theſe make up the whole Body of the Kingdom; If it appear to be their Duty, Principles and Intereſt, the Queſtion is gain'd, and no body is left to complain; and if I am miſtaken, it is with ſo great an inclination to ſerve them all, that their good nature cannot but plead my Excuſe, eſpecially when they conſider I am neither mov'd by Hopes nor Fears. Private Loſs or Gain being farther from my thought, then I hope they are from a good Underſtanding.

I ſay, *firſt*, then it is the *Duty* of all of them, becauſe they all profeſs that Religion which makes it their common duty to do it; *Chriſtianity*, I mean: For no Chriſtian ought to deprive any man of his native Right for matters of Faith and Worſhip towards God, in the way that he thinks moſt agreeable to the Will of God; becauſe it is neceſſary to a Chriſtian to believe that Faith is the Gift of God alone, and that He only is Lord of Conſcience, and is able truly to enlighten, perſwade, and eſtabliſh it; and conſequently that prejudicing Men in their Perſons or Eſtates, or depriving them of any Station in the Government, they might otherwiſe, in their turn, be capable to ſerve the Publick in, is contrary to the tenderneſs and equity of that Religion; which will yet further appear, if we conſider that Chriſtianity is the ſole Religion of the World, that is built on the Principles of Love; which brought with it the greateſt Evidences of Truth. Equally convincing our Underſtandings with its *Light*, and bearing down our Sences with its *Miracles*: Which ſilenc'd the Oracles of the Heathens by the Divine Power preſent with it, and vanquiſht their Hearts, that had left nothing elſe to conquer, leading Kings and Emperors with their Courts and Armies in triumph after the deſpiſed *Croſs* of him, who was the holy and bleſſed Author of it.

It was he that laid not his Religion in worldly Empire, nor uſed the Methods of worldly Princes to propagate it; as it came from Heaven, ſo that only ſhould have the Honour of protecting and promoting it. His whole buſineſs to mankind, from firſt to laſt, was *Love*. 'Twas firſt Love in his Father to ſend him (as St. *John* teaches) *God ſo loved the World that he ſent his Son, &c.* It was love in Jeſus Chriſt to come on that Arrand; that he, *who thought it no Robbery to be equal with God, ſhould take the form of a Servant to adopt us Children, and make himſelf of no Reputation with the World,*

World, that he might make us of Reputation with God his Father.

And he did not only come in much Love, but preach't it and preſt it both to Friends and Foes; *Love one another, Love Enemies, do good to them that hate you, forgive them that treſpaſs againſt you; what you would that other Men ſhould do unto you, do that unto them; by theſe things ſhall all Men know you are my Diſciples; for I came not to deſtroy Mens Lives,* no, not for Religion it ſelf; *for my Kingdom,* Power, Force, Weapons, and Victory *are not of this World.* In all this *Love* prevails. It was his great, his new, his laſt Commandment; of all his Diſciples, the moſt perfued by his beloved One, that in his Boſom had learn'd his Heart, as his Divine Doctrine of Love in his Epiſtle tells us.

As he liv'd in Love, ſo he died in Love, with us, and for us, and that *while we were rebellious too*; ay, he pray'd and dy'd for them who put him to Death, *ſhewing us* (ſays St. *Peter*) *an Example that we alſo ſhould follow his Steps.* And what are they? doubtleſs the Steps of Love, the Path he trod: To do good to Mankind, Enemies as well as Friends, that we may be like our heavenly Father, *that cauſes his Sun to ſhine, and his Rain to fall upon the Juſt and Unjuſt.* This muſt be the Apoſtles meaning, for the reſt of his Paſſion was Inimitable.

Now if this be *the Doctrine of Chriſt, the Nature of Chriſtianity, the Practice of the Primitive Church,* that, like *Adam,* was Created in *full Strength, Beauty and Wiſdom,* and ſo an Example to ſucceeding Ages of Religion, and to which we ſo often refer as our Original; with what Pretence to a Chriſtian Conſcience can any one ſtickle to keep *Impriſoning, Baniſhing, Impoveriſhing, Hanging and Quartering Laws* on foot for Religion ſake, but eſpecially againſt ſuch as are by Creed profeſſors of Chriſtianity as well as themſelves.

I know the Case is put hard by those that have the Laws on their side, *We do this to save our selves*; but an harder Case than Christs can never be put, whose Answer in his, ought to resolve theirs fully.

Christ is sent by his Father for the Salvation of the World: He introduces and proves his Mission by Miracles, and the great Authority of his Word and Doctrine; His Followers fully satisfied who he was, whence he came, what he taught, and how eminently confirm'd, grew impatient at Contradiction; they could not bear the least Dissent; for when some of the *Samaritans* refused to entertain their Lord, because they thought he was going for *Jerusalem*, the place of their greatest aversion; these Disciples were for having but the Word from his Mouth, and they would, in imitation of *Elijah*, *have called for Fire from Heaven to have destroy'd them. But he turned and rebuked them, and said, ye know not what* **manner of Spirit** *ye are of, for the Son of Man is not come to* **Destroy** *Men's Lives but to* **Save** *them.* This Answer is to purpose, and for all times, to be sure Christian ones; and the higher the Pretentions of any Party are to Christianity, the more inexcusible if they practice the contrary. Would not Christ then hurt them that refused him, and can we hurt our Neighbors for not receiving us? He condemned that Spirit in his Disciples, and shall we uphold the same Spirit, and that by Law too, which he condemned by his Gospel? This is *killing for Gods sake*, expressly charg'd by Christ with Impiety. *They shall think*, says he to his Disciples, *they do God good service to kill you*; who should think so? why *the Christian Persecutors.* Is it their Property to do so? yes, what shall one think then of those Christians that profess it.

The *Jews* were grievously punished of God, for that abomination of sacrificing their Children to *Moloch*, but these Laws, though they change the Object, they have not lessen'd the

the Sin; *for they offer up Man, Woman and Child*, and tho they ſay 'tis *to God*, no matter for that, ſince it makes their Caſe worſe, for 'tis to imagine that ſo good, ſo juſt, ſo ſenſible, ſo merciful a Beeing can take pleaſure in ſo much Cruelty. Well, *but if we muſt not knock Folks on the Head, what muſt we do with them*? Take an Anſwer at the Mouth of Truth and Wiſdom. *Let the Tears and Wheat grow together till the Harveſt*; whats that? he tells you, *'tis the end of the World*; ſo that whatever the Church of *England* is, 'tis certain Chriſt is for a Toleration, and his Doctrine is always in Faſhion; what he was, he is, and will be; he went not by Reaſons of State, or Cuſtoms of Countries; his Judgment was better built, who came to give Law, and not to receive it, and 'tis a *Light* and *Rule* to all times: *And He that loves Father, or Mother, or Wife, or Children, or Houſe, or Land better than him*, that is, *his Doctrine* (of which this is ſo great a part) *is not worthy of him*; and I fear no other Reaſon induces the Church of *England* to decline it.

To confirm what has been ſaid, tho I deſign Brevity, let me not loſe another Paſſage very pregnant to our purpoſe; when his Diſciples had accompliſht their firſt Miſſion, at their return they gave him the Hiſtory of their Travels: Among the reſt, they tell him of one they met with, that in his Name caſt out Devils, but becauſe he would not follow with them, *they forbad him*; here is at leaſt a Diſſenting Chriſtian, tho a Believer, yet it ſeems not one of that cloſer Congregation; we alſo ſee their Zeal and Sentence. But what ſays the Maſter, yet alive, and with them, the infallible Doctor, in whoſe Mouth was no Guile, who had not the Spirit by meaſure, and was the great Wiſdom of God to his People, was he of the ſame mind, or did he leave them without rule in the Point? His Anſwer is this. *And* Jeſus *ſaid to them*, **forbid him not**, *for he that is not againſt us is for us*. The Prohibition is taken

off.

off, and their Judgment revers'd, and from his, to be ſure, there lies no Appeal. For tho a Power of Deciſion were allow'd to ſome one or more on Earth, in matters obſcure and undetermin'd, yet in caſes *already adjudged by the Son of God himſelf, who had the Chair, and could not Err*, there can be no room for another Judge.

Now to apply it, I muſt firſt ſay, I find no ſuch Diſciples among thoſe that are of the ſide of keeping up the *Penal Laws*, God knows, the diſparity is but too unequal. But next, if they were all *Twelve* in *Weſtminſter Abby*, and ſhould be of the ſide of upholding the *Penal Laws* (which is the wrong ſide they were of before) I ſhould beg their Pardon, if I were of their Maſters mind, and objected his Wiſdom to their Zeal, and his gentle Rule to their harſh and narrow Judgment. And I beſeech the Church of *England* to conſider, that no Pretence can excuſe her Diſſent, and leſs her croſs Practice to the Judgment of her Saviour: *A Judgment that ſeems given and ſetled for the Conduct of the Church on the like Occaſions in ſucceeding times.* And 'tis pitty any worldly thing ſhould have place with her to divert her Obedience. Did Chriſt then come to ſave Mens Lives, and not to deſtroy them? and ſhould ſhe (ſhe I ſay, that pretends to be a reformed Church) uphold thoſe Laws that do deſtroy them? He, Alas! went to another Village inſtead of burning them, or theirs, for refuſing him: And ſhe forbids any, that belongs to any other, to lodge in hers, upon pain of looſing Life or Eſtate; This may make her a *Samaritan* indeed; but not the **good One**, whoſe Example would have taught her, inſtead of theſe ſharp and ruder Remedies, to have poured the Oyle of Peace and Gladneſs into thoſe Chops and Wounds that Time and Heats of all Hands had made in every Religious Party of Men. Nor does ſhe loſe anything by repealing thoſe Laws, but the Power of Perſecuting, and a good Church would never have the Temptation.

Come

Come ſome body muſt begin to forgive, let her not leave that Honour to another, nor draw upon her ſelf the Guilt and Miſchief of refuſing it. She pretends to fear the Strokes of the *Romaniſts*, but I would fain know of her, if following their Example will convert them, or ſecure her? Does ſhe hope to keep them out by the Weapons that have fail'd in their Hands, or can ſhe honourably cenſure Perſecution in them, and yet uſe it her ſelf?

But ſhe is extreamly ſcandal'd and ſcared *at the Severity upon Proteſtants in France.* 'Tis certainly very ill; but do not the Laws ſhe is ſo fond of point at the ſame Work, **Conformity**, or **Ruin.** And don't we know, that in ſome Places, and upon ſome Parties her Magiſtrates have plow'd as deep Furrows, eſpecially within theſe ſix and twenty Years. *Husbands ſeparated from their Wives, Parents from their Children, the Widows Bed and the Orphans Milk made a Prize for Religion, Houſes ſtript, Barns and Fields ſwept clean, Priſons crowded without regard to Sex or Age, and ſome of both ſorts Dungin'd to Death, and all for Religion.* If ſhe ſays they were *peeviſh Men, Biggots*, or mov'd by *private Intereſt*, ſhe ſtill made the Laws, and ſays no more for her ſelf than the French ſay for their King, which yet ſhe refuſes to take for an Anſwer. Perhaps I could parralel ſome of the ſevereſt Paſſages in that Kingdom out of the Actions of ſome Members of the Church of *England* in *cool Blood*, that are even yet for continuing the *Penal Laws* upon their plunder'd Neighbours; ſo that this Reflection of hers upon *France*, is more popular than juſt from her. But I beſeech her to look upon a Country four times bigger than *France*; *Germany* I mean, and ſhe will there ſee both Religions practis'd with great Eaſe and Amity, yet of this we muſt not hear one Word: *I* hope it is not for fear of imitating it. However 'tis diſingenious to object the Miſchiefs of Popery to a general Eaſe, when we ſee it is the way to prevent them.

This

This is but in the name of Popery *to keep all to herſelf*, as well from Proteſtant Diſſenters, as Roman Catholicks. How Chriſtian, how equal, how ſafe, that narrow Method is, becomes her well to conſider, and methinks ſhe ought not to be long about it.

I know ſhe flatters herſelf and others to believe, ſhe is a *Bulwork* againſt Popery; and with that, without any further Security to other Proteſtants, wipes her Mouth of all old Scores, and makes her preſent Court for Aſſiſtance. But when that word *Bulwork* is examined, I fear it appears too mean no more than this, *That ſhe would keep out Popery for that reaſon for which ſhe apprehends Popery would turn her out*, viz. **Temporal Intereſt.** But may I without Offence ask her, when ſhe kept Perſecution out? Or if ſhe keeps out Popery for any bodies ſake but her own? Nay, if it be not to hold the Power ſhe has in her hands, that ſhe would frighten other Parties (now ſhe has done her worſt) with what miſchief Popery would do them when it has Power. But to ſpeak freely, can ſhe be a Bulwork in the Caſe, that has been bringing the worſt part of Popery in theſe ſix and twenty Years, if *Perſecution be* ſo as ſhe ſays it is? This would be call'd *Canting* to the World in others. But I hear *ſhe begins to ſee her Fault, is heartily ſorry for it, and promiſes to do ſo no more*: And why may not Popery be as wiſe, that has alſo burnt her Fingers with the ſame work? Their praying for eaſe by *Law* looks as if they choſe That rather than *Power* for Security; and if ſo, why may not the Papiſts Live, as well as ſhe Reign? I am none of their Advocate, I am no Papiſt, but I would be juſt and merciful too. However, I muſt tell her, that keeping the Laws on foot, by which ſhe did the miſchief, is none of the plaineſt Evidences of her Repentance: They that can believe it, have little reaſon to quarrel the unaccountableneſs of Tranſubſtantiation. Is it unjuſt in Popery to invade her

Priviledges,

Priviledges, and can it be juſt in her to provoke it, by denying a Chriſtian Liberty? or can ſhe expect what ſhe will not give? or not do as ſhe would be done by, becauſe ſhe fears others will not obſerve the ſame Rule to her? Is not this *doing Evil that Good may come of it*, and that uncertain too, againſt an expreſs Command as well as common Charity? But to ſpeak freely, whether we regard the Circumſtances of the King, the Relation of his Children, the inequality of the Number and Strength of thoſe of each of their Communions, we muſt conclude, that the Averſion of the Church of *England* to this intreated Liberty, cannot reaſonably be thought to come from the Fear ſhe has of the prevalency of Popery, but the loſs of that Power the Law gives her to domineer over all Diſſenters. And is not this a *Rare Motive* for a Chriſtian Church to continue Penal Laws for Religion? If her Piety be not able to maintain her upon equal terms, methinks her having ſo much the whip hand and ſtart of all others, ſhould ſatisfy her Ambition, and quiet her Fears; for 'tis poſſible for her to keep the Churches if the Laws were aboliſhed; all the difference is, ſhe could not force: She might perſwade and convince what ſhe could: And pray, is not that enough for a true Church, without *Goales*, *Whips*, *Halters* and *Gibbets*? O what Corruption is this that has prevail'd over Men of ſuch Pretenſions to Light and Conſcience? that they do not, or will not, ſee nor feel their own Principles one remove from themſelves; but ſacrifice the nobleſt part of the Reformation to Ambition, and compel Men to truckle their tender Conſciences to the Grandure and Dominion of their Doctors.

But becauſe the Sons of the Church of *England* keep at this time, ſuch a ſtir in her favour, and fix her excellency in her oppoſition to Popery, it is worth while to conſider a little further, if really the moſt feared and diſagreeable part of Popery in her own opinion, does not belong to her, and if it does, ſhould we

not be in a fine Condition, to be in Love with our Fetters, and to Court our Misery?

That part of *Popery* which the Church of *England* with most success objects against, is her *Violence*. This is that she can only pretend to fear: Her Doctrines she partly Professes or thinks she can easily refute. She does not think her Doctors *Conjurers*, for their *Transubstantiation*, or *dangerous* to the State for their *Beads*, or their *Purgatory*. *But forcing others to their Faith, or ruining them for refusing it, is the terrible thing we are taught by her to apprehend.* Now granting this to be the case, in reference to the Roman Religion, where it is in the Chair: I ask, if the Church of *England*, with her better Doctrines, has not been Guilty of this Impiety, and for that cause more blameable the the Church she opposes so much? If we look into her Acts of State, we find them many, and bitter, against all sorts of Dissenters. There is nigh twenty Laws made, and yet in force, to constrain Conformity, and they have been executed too, as far and as often as she thought it fit for her Interest to let them. *Some have been Hang'd, many Banish't, more Imprisoned, and some to Death; and abundance Impoverish't;* and all this meerly for Religion: Tho, by a base and barbarous use of Words, it has been call'd *Treason, Sedition, Routs and Riots*; the worst of aggravations, since they are not contented to make People unhappy for their Dissent, but rob them of all they had left, *their Innocency*. This has been her State Craft, to coin Guilt, and make men dangerous, to have her ends upon them. But that way of Palliating Persecution, by rendring a thing that it is not, and punishing men for Crimes they never committed, show but little Conscience in the Projectors. The Church of *England* crys out against Transubstantiation, because of the Invisibility of the Change. She don't see Christ there, and therefore he is not there, and yet her Sons do the same thing. For tho all the tokens

tokens of a Riot are as inviſible in a Diſſenters Meeting, as Chriſt in the Tranſubſtantiation, yet it muſt be a Riot without any more to do: The Engliſh of which is, 'tis a Riot to pray to God in the humbleſt and peaceableſt manner in a Conventicle.

I know it is ſaid, *The Blood-ſhed in the fore-going Raign, and the Plots of the Papiſts againſt Queen* Elizabeth, *drew thoſe Laws from the Church of* England. But this was no reaſon why ſhe ſhould do ill becauſe they had done ſo: Beſides, it may be anſwered, that that Religion having ſo long intermixt it ſelf with worldly Power, it gave way to take the revenges of it. And certainly the great men of the Church of *England* endeavouring *to intercept Queen* Mary, *by proclaiming the Lady* Jane Gray, *and the Apprehenſion the Papiſts had of the better Title of* Mary *Queen of* Scots, *together with a long Poſſeſſion*, were ſcurvy Temptations to kindle ill Deſigns againſt that extraordinary Queen. But tho nothing can excuſe and leſs juſtifie thoſe cruel Proceedings; yet if there were any reaſon for the Laws, it is plainly removed; for the Intereſts are joyn'd, and have been ſince King *James* the firſt came to the Crown. However, 'tis certain there were Laws enough, or they might have had them, to puniſh all civil Enormities, without the neceſſity of making any againſt them as Papiſts. And ſo the civil Government had ſtood upon its own Legs, and Vices only againſt it had been puniſhable by it. In ſhort, it was the falſeſt Step that was made in all that great Queens Raign, & the moſt diſhonourable to the Principles of the firſt Reformers, and therefore I know no better Reaſon why it ſhould be continued, than that which made the *Cardinal* in the Hiſtory of the *Council of Trent* oppoſe the Reformation at *Rome*; That tho it was true that they were in the wrong, yet the admitting of it *approved the judgment of their Enemies, and ſo good-night to Infallibility*. Let not this be the Practice of

the Church of *England*, and the rather, becauſe ſhe does not pretend to it: But let her reflect, that ſhe has loſt her King from her Religion, and they that have got him, naturally hope for eaſe for theirs by him, that 'tis the end they labour'd, and the great uſe they have for him, and I would fain wonder that ſhe never ſaw it before; but whether ſhe did or no, why ſhould ſhe begrudg it, at leaſt refuſe it now? Since 'tis plain, that there is nothing we eſteem dangerous in Popery that other Laws are not ſufficient to ſecure us from: Have we not enough of them? let her think of more, and do the beſt ſhe can to *diſcover Plotters, puniſh Traitors, ſuppreſs the Seditious, and keep the Peace better* than thoſe we have can enable us to do: But, for Gods ſake, let us never direct Laws againſt Men for the cauſe of Religion, or puniſh them before they have otherwiſe done amiſs. Let Mens Works, not their Opinions, turn the Edg of the Magiſtrates Sword againſt them, elſe 'tis Beheading them before they are Born.

By the common Law of this Kingdom there muſt be ſome *Real and Proper Overt Act* that proves Treaſon; ſome *Malice* that proves Sedition; and ſome *violent Action* that proves a Rout or Riot. If ſo, *to call any ſort of Religious Orders*, the one, or *Praying to God in a way out of faſhion*, the other, is preposterous, and puniſhing People for it, down right *Murther*, or *Breach of the Peace*, according to the true uſe of Words, and the old Law of *England*.

If the Church of *England* fears the growth of Popery, let her be true to the Religion ſhe owns, and betake her ſelf to *Faith*, rather than *Force*, by a *pious*, *humble*, and a *good Example*: To *convince* and *perſwade*, which is the higheſt honour to any Church, and the greateſt Victory over Men. I am for a National Church as well as ſhe, ſo it be by *Conſent*, and not by *Conſtraint*. But Coercive Churches have the *ſame Principle*, tho not the ſame *Intereſt*. A Church, *by Law eſtabliſhed*, is a State

State Church, and that is no Argument of Verity, unleſs the State that makes her ſo be infallible; and becauſe that will not be aſſerted, the other can never oblige the Conſcience, and conſequently the Compulſion ſhe uſes, is unreaſonable. This very Principle *juſtifies the King of* France, *and the Inquiſition*. For Laws being equally of Force in all Countries where they are made, it muſt be as much Fault in the Church of *Englands* Judgment to be *a Proteſtant at Rome, or a Calvaniſt at Paris*, as to be a *Papiſt at London*: Then where is Truth or Conſcience but in the Laws of Countries! which renders her an *Hobbiſt*, notwithſtanding her long and loud Clamours againſt the *Leviathan*:

I beg her, for the love of Chriſt, that ſhe would think of theſe things, and not eſteem me her Enemy for performing the part of ſo good a Friend. Plain Dealing becomes that Caracter; no matter whether the Way be agreeable, ſo it be right: We are all to do our Duty, and leave the reſt to God: He can beſt anſwer for our Obedience, that Commands it; and our Dependance upon his Word, will be our Security in our Conduct. What weight is it to a Church, that ſhe is *the Church by Law eſtabliſhed*, when no humane Law can make a true Church? A true Church is of *Chriſts making*, and is by Goſpel eſtabliſhed. 'Tis a Reflection to a Church that would be thought true, to *ſtoop* to humane Law for her Eſtabliſhment. I have been often ſcandal'd at that Expreſſion from the Sons of the Church of *England*, eſpecially thoſe of the Robe, *What do you talk for? our Reltgion is by Law eſtabliſhed*, as if that determin'd the Queſtion of its Truth againſt all other Perſwaſions.

The *Jews* had this to ſay againſt our Saviour, *We have a Law, and by our Law he ought to Dye*. The Primitive Chriſtians, and ſome of our firſt Reformers Dyed *as by Law eſtabliſhed*, if that would mend the matter; but does that make it

lawful

lawful to a Christian Conscience? we must ever demur to this Plea. No greater Argument of a Churches Defection from Christianity than turning Persecutor. 'Tis true, the Scripture says, *The Earth shall help the Woman*, but that was to save her self, *not to destroy others*: For 'tis the Token that's given by the Holy Ghost of a false Church; *That none must Buy or Sell in her Dominions that will not receive her Mark in their Forehead, or Right-hand.* That is by going to Church against Conscience, or bribing lustily to stay at Home.

Things don't change, tho men do. Persecution is still the same, let the hand alter never so often; but the Sin may not: For doubtless it is greatest in those that make the highest claim to Reformation. For while they plead their own Light for doing so, they hereby endeavour to *extinguish* anothers Light that can't concur. What a Man can't do, *it is not his Fault he don't do, nor should he be compell'd to do it, and at least of all be punished for not doing it. No Church can give Faith, and therefore can't force it; for what is constrain'd is not Believed; since Faith is in that sence free, and constraint gives no time to assent; I say, what I don't will is not I, and what I don't Choose is none of mine, and anothers can't save me, tho it should save him.* So that this Method never obtains the end design'd, since it Saves no body, because it Converts no body; it may breed *Hypocrisie*, but that is quite another thing than *Salvation.*

What then is the use of Penal Laws? only to show the Sincerity of them that Suffer, *and Cruelty of those that make and execute them.* And all time tells us they have ever fail'd those that have lean'd upon them: They have always been loosers at last: Besides, it is a most unaccountable obstinacy in the Church of *England* to stickle to uphold them, for after having made it a matter of Religion and Conscience to Address the late King in behalf of this, to think He should leave his Conscience behind him in *Flanders*, or when they waited on him

him to the Crown, that he ſhould ſend it thither upon a Pilgrimage, is want of wit at beſt, pardon the cenſure. Could they Conſcientiouſly oppoſe his Excluſion for his Religion, and now his Religion becauſe he will not leave it? Or can they reaſonably maintain thoſe *Teſts* that were contrived to exclude him when *Duke of York*, while they endured none to *hinder him from the Crown?* I heartily beg the Church of *Englands* excuſe, if I ſay I can't comprehend her: Perhaps the fault is mine, but ſure I am ſhe is extreamly dark. How could ſhe hope for this King without his Conſcience? or conceive that his Honour or Conſcience would let him leave the Members of his Communion under the laſh of ſo many Deſtroying Laws? would ſhe be ſo ſerv'd by a Prince of her own Religion, and ſhe in the like Circumſtances? She would not, let her talk till Dooms-Day.

To object *the Kings promiſe*, when he came to the Crown, againſt the repeal of the Penal Laws, ſhows not his Inſincerity, but her Uncharitableneſs, or that really ſhe has a very weak place: For it is plain the King *firſt declared* his own Religion, and then *promiſed to maintain hers*; but was that to be without, or together with his own? His Words ſhows he intended that his own ſhould *Live*, tho t'other might *Raign*. I ſay again, it is not credible that a Prince of any Sincerity can refuſe a being to his own Religion, when he continues another in its well being. This were to act upon *State* not *Conſcience*, and to make more Conſcience to uphold a Religion he cannot be of, *than of giving eaſe to one his Conſcience obliges him to be of*. I cannot imagin how *this thought* could enter into any Head that had Brains, or Heart that had Honeſty. And to ſay true, they muſt be a ſort of State Conſciences, *Conſciences* as by Law Eſtabliſh'd, that can follow the Law againſt their Convictions.

But this is not all I have to obſerve from that objection: It implies too evidently, firſt, that ſhe thinks her ſelf *ſhaken*, if the

the Penal Laws be repeal'd; then by Law Eſtabliſhed ſhe muſt mean, *Eſtabliſhed by thoſe Penal Laws.* Secondly, that the King having promiſed to maintain her, as by Law eſtabliſhed, *he ought not to endeavour their Repeal by which ſhe is eſtabliſhed.* I confeſs this is very cloſe arguing, but then ſhe muſt not take it ill, if all Men think her ill founded; for any thing muſt be ſo, that is eſtabliſhed by deſtroying Laws? Laws, that *Time* and *Practice* have declared Enemies to *Property* and *Conſcience.* O let her not hold by that Charter, nor Point thither for her Eſtabliſhment and Defence, if ſhe would be thought a Chriſtian Church.

Plutarch had rather one ſhould think there never was ſuch a Man in the World, than that *Plutarch* was an ill Man. Shall the Church of *England*, that glories in a great Light, *be more concern'd for her Power, than her Credit*? To be, than to be that which ſhe ſhould be? I would ſay, far be it from her, for her own ſake, and which is of much more moment, for the ſake of the general Cauſe of Religion.

Let us ſee therefore if there be not another way of underſtanding thoſe Words, more decent to the King, and more honourable for her, *viz.* that ſhe is in the *National Chair, has the Churches and Revenues, and is Mother of thoſe that do not adhere to any ſeparate Communion, and that the King has promiſed to maintain her in this Poſt from the Invaſions of any other perſwaſion that would wreſt theſe Priviledges out of her hands*: this he promiſed formerly; this he has very particularly repeated in his gracious Declaration: But to Ruin Men that would not Conform, while himſelf was ſo great a Diſſenter, and came ſuch, to her knowledge, to the Crown, can be no part of his Promiſes in the Opinion of common Sence and Charity. Is there no Difference to be obſerved between not turning her out, and deſtroying all others not of her Communion: He will not turn her out, there's his Promiſe, and he has not done

it,

there's his performance: Nor will he do it, I am confident, if she pleases. But there is no manner of necessity from this Engagement that all Parties else are to be Confounded. Tho if it were so, 'tis ill Divinity to press such Promises upon a Princes Conscience, that can't be perform'd with a good One by Any Body.

Let her remember how often she has upbraided her Dissenters with this, *Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsars*, whilst they have returned upon her t'other half of the Text, *and render unto God the things that are Gods*. It happens now that *God* and *Cæsar* are both of a mind, which perhaps does not alwayes fall out, at least about the Point in hand. Will she Dissent from both now? Her case, believe me, will be doubtful then. I beg her to be Considerate. 'Tis the greatest time of Tryal she has met with since she was a Church. To acquit her self like a Member of Christs Universal One, let her keep nothing that voids her pretentions. The *Babilonish* Garment will undo her. Practices Inconsistant with her Reformation will ruin her. The *Martyrs* Blood Won the Day, and her Severity has almost lost it. They Suffer'd by Law, she makes Laws *for Suffering*. Is this an Immitation of their practice, *to uphold the Weapons of their Destruction*? I must tell her, 'tis being a *Martyr* for Persecution, and not by it. Another Path then that the holy Ancients, and our humble Ancestors trod, and which will lead her to be deserted and Contemn'd of every Body that counts it safer to follow the Blessed Rule and practice of Christ and his inspir'd Messengers, then her narrow and worldly Policies. But that which heighthens the Reproach, is the offer of the Romanists themselves to make a perpetual civil Peace with her, and that she refuses, Would the Martyrs have done this? surely no. Let her remember the first Argument honest old *Fox* advances against that Church, is the Church of *Englands* present Darling, *viz.* Penal Laws for Religion; as she may see at the beginning of

his first Volumn: Doubtless he was much in the right, which makes her extreamly in the wrong. Nothing, says the Prophet, must harm in Gods holy Mountain, and that's the Church sayes *Fox*, and therefore he says, Christ's Church never Persecutes. Leave then God with his own Work, and Christ with his own Kingdom. As it is not of the World, let not the World touch it; no, *not to uphold it*, tho they that bear it should trip by the way. Remember *Uzza*, he would needs support the Ark *when the Oxen* Stumbled; *but was struck Dead for his Pains*. The Presumption is more than Parralel. Christ promis'd *to be present with his Church to the end of the World*. He bid them *fear not*, and told them, *that sufficient was the Day for the Evil thereof*. How? with Penal Laws? no such matter; but his Divine Persence. Therefore it was, He call'd not for *Legions* to fight for him, because his Work needed it not They that want them have an other sort of Work to do: And 'tis too plain, that *Empire*, and not Religion, has been too much the Business. But, O let it not be so any more! To be a *True* Church is better then to be a *National* One; especially as so uphold. *Press Vertue, Punish Vice, Dispence with Opinion*; *Perswade*, but don't *Impose*. Are there *Tares* in Opinion? let them alone; you heard *they are to grow with the Wheat till Harvest*, that is, *the end of the World*. *Should they* not be pluckt up before? no; and 'tis *Angles* Work at last too. Christ that knew all Men, saw no Hand on Earth fit for that Business. Let us not then usurp their Office. Besides, *we are to Love Enemies*; this is the great Law of our Religion; *by what Law then are we to Persecute them?* and if not Enemies, not Friends and Neighbours certainly.

The Apostle rejoyced *that Christ was Preached out of Envy*, If so, I am sure we ought not to envy Christians the enjoyment of the Liberty of their Consciences. Christianity should be propagated by the Spirit of Christianity, and not by Violence,

lence or Perſecution, for that's the Spirit of Antichriſtianity. Nor for fear of it, ſhould we, of Chriſtians, become Antichriſtians. Where is Faith in God? where is truſt in Providence? let us do our Duty, and leave the reſt with Him; *and not do Evil that Good may come of it*; for that ſhows a Diſtruſt in God, and a Confidence in our own Inventions for ſecurity. No reaſon of State can excuſe our Diſobedience to his *Rule*; and we deſert the Principles of our heavenly Maſter when we decline it. The Queſtion is about Conſcience, about this we can none of us be too tender nor exemplary. 'Tis in right doing that Chriſtians can hope for Succeſs; and for true Victory only through Faith and Patience. But if to avoid what we fear, we contradict our Principles, we may juſtly apprehend *that God will deſert us in an unlawful way of maintaining them.* Perhaps this may be Gods time of trying all Parties, what we will do; whether we well rely upon him or our own feeble Proviſions; whether we will allow what we our ſelves in our turn *have all of us deſired*; if not, may we not expect to ſuffer the thing we would inflict? for our *Penal Laws* cannot ſecure us from the turns of Providence, and leſs ſupport us under them. Let us conſider the true ground of the difficulty that is made, if it be not partial and light in Gods Scale; for to that tryal all things muſt come, and his Judgment is inevitable as well as infallible. Beſides, if we have not tryed all other methods, we are inexcuſable in being ſo tenacious for this. I do therefore, in all humility, beſeech all ſorts of Profeſſors of Chriſtianity in theſe Kingdoms, to abſtract themſelves from thoſe Jealouſies which worldly motives are apt to kindle in their Minds, and with an even and undiſturbed Soul purſue their Chriſtian Duty in this great Conjuncture: Conſidering *the Race is not to the Swift, nor the Battle to the Strong*, and that for all our Watchmen, *'tis God alone* (at laſt) *that keeps the City.* Not that I would decline a fitting, but an unchriſti-

an Proviſion: For though the Foundation were never ſo true, yet if our Superſtructure be *Hay* and *Stuble* (our own narrow Devices) the Fire will conſume it, and our Labour will be worſe then in vain. Let us not therefore *Sow what we would not Reap, becauſe we muſt Reap what we Sow:* And remember who told us, *what we meaſure to others ſhall be meeted to us again.* Let us therefore do unto all Parties of men, *as we would be done unto by them in their turn of Power:* Leaſt our fear of their undutifulneſs, *ſhould tempt us out of our Duty,* and ſo draw upon our ſelves the miſchiefs we are afraid of. Sacred Writ is full of this, in the Doctrine of both Teſtaments; and as we profeſs to believe it, we are inexcuſable if we do not practice it. Let the Spirit then of Chriſtian Religion prevail. Let our Policies give way to our Duty, and our Fears will be overcome of our Hopes, which will not make us aſham'd at the laſt and great Judgment: where, O God! let us all appear with Comfort.

I could yet Enlarge upon this Subject; for nothing can be more fruitful. I could ſay, that a Church that *Denies* Infallibility, cannot *force*, becauſe ſhe cannot be *certain*, and ſo *Penal Laws* (tho it were poſſible that they could be lawful in others) in her, *would be Unjuſt.* That Scripture leaves Men to *Conviction* and *Perſwaſion.* That the true Church-Weapons are *Light* and *Grace*; and her puniſhments, *Cenſure* and *Excommunication.* That *Goals* and *Gibbets* are Inadiquated Methods for Converſion, and that they never *ſucceeded.* That this *forbids* all further light to come into the World, and ſo *limits* the Holy One, which in Scripture is made a great Sin. And laſtly, that ſuch enſnare their own Poſterity that may be of an other mind, and forfit by it the eſtates they have ſo carefully tranſmitted to them. Thus far againſt Impoſition. And againſt Compliance. I could ſay, that its to betray Gods Soveraignty over Conſcience; To deify Men; Gratifie preſumption; foil and extinguiſh truth in the mind; obey blind-

fold

fold; make over the Soul without Security; turn Hipocrite, and abundance more; each of which heads might well merit an whole chapter. But this having been well and seasonably consider'd elsewhere, I shall now proceed to the second part of this discourse, in which I will be as brief, and yet as full as I can.

PART II.

That 'tis the Principle of Men of Note of all Parties.

BUT what need is there of this, may some say, when all Parties profess to be of the same Judgment, *That Conscience ought not to be forced, nor Religion imposed upon men at their civil peril?* I own they are all of that mind, at one time or other, and therefore that I may purge my self of any Animosity to the Doctrine of the Church of *England*, I will Ingeniously confess, the severe conduct I have argued against, is not to be imputed to her Principles; but then her Evil will be the greater, that in fact has so notoriously contradicted them. I know some of her defenders will hardly allow that too; Tho the more candid give us their Silence or Confession: For they tell us, *'tis not the Church that has done it*, which, unless they mean, the Laws were not made a Church, must needs be false, since those that made and executed them were of her own Communion, and are that great body of Members that constitute her a Church; but by her shifting them off, 'tis but reasonable to conclude that she tacitly condemns what she publickly disowns. One would think then it should not be so hard to perswade her to quit them, in the way she made them, or to injoyn her Sons to do it, if that language be to harsh for her.

This

This Story she must hear of some way, and I pray God she may endeavour to do her duty in it. She is not alone; for every Party in Power has too evidently lapst into this Evil; tho under the prevalency and persecution of another Interest they have ever writ against club Law for Religion. And to the end that I may do the Reformation Right, and the Principles of the Church of *England*, Justice, I must say, that hardly one person of any note, dyed in the time of *Queen Mary*, that did not pass Sentance upon Persecution as Antichristian, particularly *Latimer*, *Philpot*, *Bradford*, *Rogers*, very Eminent Reformers. The Apologies that were writ in those times, are of the same strain, as may be seen in *Jewel*, *Haddon*, *Reynolds*, *&c.* and the Papists were with reason thought much in the wrong by those Primative Protestants, for the Persecution that they raised against them, for matters of pure Religion. But what need we go so far back? is it not recent in memory, that *Bishop Usher* was Employ'd to *O. Cromwell* by some of the Clergy of the Church of *England* for Liberty of Conscience? *Dr Parr*, in the Life of *Dr Usher* Primate of *Armagh*, fol. 75. has that passage thus.

'*Cromwell* forbidding the Clergy, under great penalties, to 'teach Schools, or to perform any part of their ministerial 'function; some of the most Considerable Episcopal Clergy 'in and about *London*, desired my Lord *Primate* that he 'would use his Interest with *Cromwell*, (since they heard he 'pretended a great respect for him) that as he granted Liberty 'of Conscience to almost all sorts of Religions, so the Epis-'copal Divines might have the same freedom of serving God in 'their private Congregations (since they were not premitted 'the publick Churches) according to the Liturgie of the Church 'of *England*; and that neither the Ministers, nor Those 'that frequented That Service, might be any more hindered, 'or disturbed by his Souldiers: So according to their desire, he

went

'went and uſed his utmoſt Endeavours with *Cromwell*, for the 'taking off this reſtraint, which was at laſt promiſed (tho 'with ſome difficulty) that they ſhould not be moleſted, pro-'vided they meddled not with any matters relating to his 'Government.

Certainly thoſe Gentlemen were of my mind. And to give *Dr Hammond* his due, who I underſtand was one of them, he left it to the Witneſſes of his end, as his dying Counſel to the Church of *England*, That they diſplaced no man out of the Univerſity or preſent Church, but that by Love, and an holy Life they ſhould prevail upon thoſe in poſſeſſion to come into their Church. But this lookt ſo little like the Policy and Ambition of the Living, that they reſolved it ſhould be Buried with him. This I had from an eminent Hand in *Oxford*, a year or two after his Death. An older man out liv'd him, and one of the moſt Learned and Pious of that Communion, *Biſhop Sande ſon* I mean: They were the two great men of their ſort that was of the Party. Let us ſee what this Reverend man ſays to our poin'.

'The Word of God doth expreſsly forbid us to ſubject our 'Conſciences to the Judgment of any other, or to uſurp a 'Dominion over the Conſciences of any One. Several caſes of Conſcience diſcuſſed in ten Lectures in the Divinity School at *Oxford*, 3 Lect. 30 Sect. pag. 103. Printed 1660.

'He is not worthy to be Chriſts Diſciple, who is not the 'Diſciple of Chriſt *alone*. The Simplicity and Sincerity of the 'Chriſtian Faith, hath ſuffered a great prejudice ſince we have 'been divided into Parties, neither is their any hope that Re-'ligion ſhould be reſtored to her former Original and Purity, 'until the Wounds that were made wider by our daily Quar-'rels and Diſſentions, being anointed with the *Olye of Brother-'ly Love*, as with a Balſom, ſhall begin to cloſe again, and 'to grow entire into the ſame Unity of Faith and Charity, *ibid Sect.* 29.

'The

'The obligation of Conſcience doth not ſignifie any Com-
'pulſion, for, to ſpeak properly, the Conſcience can no
'more be compelled than the Free-will. *ibid* 4. *Lecture Sect.* 5.
pag. 109.

'The expreſs Commandment of God doth oblige the Con-
'ſcience properly by it ſelf and by its own force; and this
'obligation is abſolute, becauſe it doth directly and always
'oblige, and becauſe it obligeth all perſons, and the obligation of
'it is never to be cancelled. *No one but God alone* hath power to
'impoſe a Law upon the Conſcience of any Man, to which
'it ought to be ſubjected, as obliging by it ſelf, —— This
'Concluſion is proved by the words of the Apoſtle, *There is*
'*but one Law-giver, who can both ſave and deſtroy,* In which
'words two Arguments do profer themſelves to our Obſerva-
'tion; In the firſt place they aſſert there is but one Legiſlator;
'not one picked out amongſt many; not one above many;
'but one excluſively, that is to ſay, One, and but one only.
'The Apoſtle otherwiſe had made uſe of a very ineffectual
'argument, to prove what he had propounded; for he rebu-
'keth thoſe who unadviſedly did paſs their Judgment either on
'the perſons, or the deeds of other Men, as the Invaders of
'their Rights. *Who art Thou* (ſaith he) *who doſt judge another*?
'as if he ſhould have ſaid, doſt thou know thy ſelf, what thou
'art, and what thou doſt? It doth not belong to Thee to
'thruſt thy ſawcy Sickle into the harveſt of another Man,
'*much leſs boldly to fling thy ſelf into the Throne of Almighty*
'*God.* If already Thou art Ignorant of it, then know, that
'it belongeth to him *alone* to judge of the Conſciences of men,
'*to whom alone it doth belong to impoſe Laws upon the Conſci-*
'*ences of men,* which none can do but God alone. *ibid pag.*
111, 112, 113.

"The Condition and Natural eſtate of the Conſcience it
"ſelf is ſo placed as it were in the middle *betwixt* God and the
"will

'will of Man, as that which is usually and truly spoken of 'Kings and Emperors, may as truly be verified of the Con-'sciences of every man, *Solo Deo minores esse, nec aliquam in 'Terris superiorem agnoscere; They are less than God only, and on 'Earth do acknowledge no Superior.* That Speech of the Em-'peror *Maximilian* the first is very memorable, *Conscientij 'Dominari velle, est Arcem Cœli invadere; To exercise a Domi-'nation over Consciences, is to invade the Tower of Heaven.* He 'is a Plunderer of the Glory of God, and a *nefarious Invader* 'of the Power that is due unto him, whosoever he is that 'shall claim a right to the Consciences of men, or practice an 'Usurpation over them. *ibid. Sect.* 11. *pag.* 115.

And yet this is the sad consequence of imposing Religion upon Conscience, and punishing Non-conformity with worldly Penalties.

Let us now hear what the late *Bishop* of *Down* says in his *Lib. of Prophesie* to our Point, 'I am very much displeased 'that so many Opinions and new Doctrines are commenced 'amongst us, but more troubled, that every man that hath an 'Opinion thinks his own and other mens Salvation is concern-'ed in its maintenance, but most of all, that men should be 'Persecuted and Afflicted for disagreeing in such Opinions, 'which they cannot with sufficient grounds obtrude upon o-'thers necessarily, because they cannot propound them Infal-'libly, and because they have no warrant from Scripture so to 'do; for if I shall tye other men to believe my Opinion, be-'cause I think I have a place of Scripture which seems to 'warrant it to my understanding; why may he not serve up 'another dish to me in the same Dress, and exact the same 'task of me to believe the contradictory? *Liberty of Prophesie,* Epist. Dedic. pag. 8, 9.

'The Experience which Christendom hath had in this last 'Age is Argument enough that *Toleration of differing Opinions*

'is so far from disturbing the Publick Peace, or destroying the 'Interest of Princes and Common-wealths, that it does advan-'tage to the Publick, it secures Peace, because there is not so 'much as the *pretence of Religion* left to such Persons to con-'tend for, it being already indulged to them. *ibid. p.* 21.

'It is a proverbial saying, *Quod nimia familiaritas servo-'rum est conspiratio adversus Dominum*, and they who for their 'security run in Grots and Cellers, and Retirements, think 'that they being upon the defensive, those Princes and those 'Laws that drive them to it are their Enemies, and therefore 'they cannot be secure, unless the Power of the one, and the 'Obligation of the other be lessened and rescinded; and then 'the being restrained and made miserable indears the discon-'tented Persons mutually, and makes more hearty and dan-'gerous Confederations. *ibid. pag.* 23.

'No man speaks more unreasonably, than he that *denies to 'men the use of their Reason in choice of their Religion.* ibid. pag. 169.

'*No Christian is to be put to Death, Dismembred, or other-'wise directly Persecuted for his Opinion, which does not teach Im-'piety or Blasphemy.* ibid. pag. 190.

'There is a popular Pity that follows all Persons in Misе-'ry and that Compassion breeds likeness of Affections, and 'that very often produces likeness of Perswasion; and so much 'the rather because there arises a Jealousie and pregnant Sus-'pition that they who Persecute an Opinion are destitute of 'sufficient Arguments to confute it, and that the Hangman is 'the best Disputant. *ibid. pag.* 197, 198.

'If a man cannot change his Opinion when he lists, nor 'ever does heartily or resolutely, but when he cannot do other-'wise, then to use Force, may make him a Hypocrite, but never 'to be a right Believer, and so instead of erecting a Trophee to 'God and true Religion, *we build a Monument for the Devil.* ibid. pag. 200.

'The

'The *Trick* of giving Persons differing in Opinion over to 'the secular Power, at the best is no better than *Hypocrisie*, 'removing Envy from themselves, and laying it upon others, 'a refusing to do that in external Act, *which they do in Council* '*and Approbation.* ibid. pag. 209.

Thus far *Bishop Tayler*, and one of the most Learned Men of the Church of *England* in his time.

Let me add another Bishop, held learn'd by all, and in great Reputation with the men of his Communion, and among them *the Lords Spiritual and Temporal in Parliament assembled*, who have sufficiently declared against this persecuting Spirit on the account of Religion by their full approbation of, and *thanks returned to the Bishop of St* Asaph *for his Sermon preached before them* November *the* 5*th.* 1680. *and their desire that he would Print and Publish that Sermon.* The Bishop says, that, 'They who are most given to hate and destroy others, especi- 'ally those others who differ from them in Religion, they are 'not the *Church of God*, or at least they are so far corrupt in 'that particular. *pag.* 8.

Again he says, 'That of Societies of Men, Christians, of 'all others are most averse from ways of Violence and Blood; 'especially from using any such ways upon the account of Re- 'ligion: And among Christian Churches, where they differ 'among themselves, if either of them use those ways upon the 'account of Religion, they give a strong Presumption 'against themselves that they are not truly Christians. *ibid.* *pag.* 9.

'There is reason for this, because, we know that Christ gave 'Love for the Character by which his Disciples were to be 'known. *John* 13. 35. *By this shall all Men know that you are* '*my Disciples, if you have Love to one another.* And least men 'should unchristen others first, that they may hate them, and 'Destroy them afterwards, Christ enlarged his Precept of

'Love, and extended it even to Enemies, and not only to 'ours, but to the Enemies of our Religion, *Matt.* 5. 43, 44. *ibid. pag.* 9.

'As our holy Religion excels all others in this admirable 'temper, so by this we may usually judge who they are 'that excel among Christian Churches, when there happens 'any difference between them, whether touching the Faith, or 'the terms of Communion. They that were the more Fierce, 'they generally had the worst Cause. *ibid. pag.* 12, 13.

'The Council of **Nice** suppressed the *Arians* by no other 'Force, but putting *Arians* out of their Bishopricks; they 'could not think Hereticks fit to be trusted with cure of 'Souls; but otherwise, as to *Temporal things*, I do not find that 'they inflicted any kind of Punishment; but when the *Ari-* 'ans came to have the *Power* in their Hands, when theirs was 'come to be the **Imperial Religion**, then Depriving was 'nothing, Banishment was the least that they inflicted. *ibid. pag.* 14.

'Neither our Religion, nor our Church, is of a *persecuting* 'Spirit. I know not how it may be in particular Persons; 'but I say again, it is not in the *Genius* of our *Church*: She 'hath no Doctrine that *teacheth Persecution*. *ibid. pag.* 20.

'I would have no man punished for his Religion, no not 'them that destroy men for Religion. *ibid. pag.* 37.

Dr *Stillingfleet* comes short of none of them on this Subject. 'Our Saviour, *says he*, never pressed Followers as men do *Soul-* 'diers, but said, *If any man will come after me, let him take up* 'his Cross (not his Sword) *and follow me*. His was ἡμερος καὶ φιλάνθρωπος νομοθεσία, his very Commands shewed his Meek- 'ness; his Laws were sweet and 'gentle Laws; not like *Draco*'s that 'were writ in Blood, unless it were 'his own that gave them. His design 'was

Irenicum, a Weapon-Salve for the Churches Wounds, by *Edward Stillingfleet*, Rector of . . uton in Bedfordshire, in Preface to the Reader.

'was to eaſe men of their former Burdens, and not lay on more; the Duties he required were no other but ſuch as were 'neceſſary, and withal very juſt and reaſonable. He that came to take away the inſupportable Yoke of Jewiſh Ceremonies, certainly did never intend to gall the Necks of his Diſciples with another inſtead of it. And it would be ſtrange the Church ſhould require more than Chriſt himſelf did; and make other conditions of her Communion, *than our Saviour did of Diſcipleſhip*. What poſſible reaſon can be aſſigned or given why ſuch things ſhould not be ſufficient for Communion with a Church, *which are ſufficient for eternal Salvation*? And certainly thoſe things are ſufficient for that; which are laid down as neceſſary Duties for Chriſtianity by our Lord and Saviour in his Word. *What ground can there be why Chriſtians ſhould not ſtand upon the ſame terms now which they did in the time of Chriſt and his Apoſtles*? Was not Religion ſufficiently guarded and fenced in them? Was there ever more true and cordial Reverence in the Worſhip of God? What *Charter* hath Chriſt given the Church to *bind men up to more than himſelf hath done*? Or to exclude thoſe from her Society who may be admitted into Heaven? Will Chriſt ever thank Men at the great day for keeping ſuch out from Communion with his Church, when he will vouchſafe not only Crowns of Glory to, but it may be *Aureola* too, if there be any ſuch things there? The Grand Commiſſion the Apoſtles were ſent out with, was only to *teach what Chriſt had commanded them*. Not the leaſt Intimation of any Power given them to impoſe or require any thing beyond what himſelf had ſpoken to them, or they were directed to by the immediate Guidance of the Spirit of God.

'Without all Controverſie, the main Inlet of all the Diſtractions, Confuſions and Diviſions of the Chriſtian

'World

'World, hath been by adding other Conditions of Church 'Communion than Christ hath done.

'There is nothing the *Primitive Church* deserves greater 'imitation by us in, than in that admirable Temper, Mode-'ration and Condescention which was used in it towards all the 'Members of it.

'This admirable Temper in the Primitive Church might 'be largely cleared from that Liberty they allowed freely to 'Dissenters from them in matters of Practice and Opinion; 'as might be cleared from *Cyprian*, *Austin*, *Jerome*, and 'others.——Leaving the Men to be won by observing the true 'decency and order of Churches, whereby those who act up-'on a true Principle of Christian Ingenuity may be sooner 'drawn to a Compliance in all lawful things, than by Force 'and rigorous Impositions, which make men suspect the 'weight of the thing it self, when such Force is used to make 'it enter. *in Preface.*

The same is in effect declared by the *House of Commons*, when they returned their Thanks to Dr. *Tillotson*, *Dean of Canterbury*, for his Sermon preached before them *November* the *5th.* 1678. *desiring him to Print that Sermon*, where he says, upon our *Saviours* Words, '*Ye know not what manner of* 'Spirit ye are of, Ye own your selves to be my Disciples, but 'do you consider what Spirit now Acts and Governs you? not 'that surely which my Doctrine designes to mould and fashi-'on you into; which is not a *Furious and Persecuting*, and '*Destructive Spirit*, but Mild and Gentle, and Saving; tender 'of the Lives and Interests of Men, even of those who are 'our greatest Enemies. *pag.* 6, 7.

'No difference of Religion, no pretence of Zeal for God 'and Christ can warrant and justifie this Passionate and Fierce, 'this Vindictive and Exterminating Spirit. *ibid. pag.* 7.

'He (*i. e.* Christ) came to introduce a Religion, which

'consults

'consults not only the Eternal Salvation of mens Souls, but 'their Temporal Peace and Security, their Comfort and Hap-'pineſs in this World, *ibid pag.* 8.

'In ſeemed good to the Author of this Inſtitution to compel 'no man to it by Temporal Puniſhment. *ibid. pag.* 13.

'To *ſeperate* Goodneſs and Mercy from God, Compaſſion 'and Charity from Religion, is to make the two beſt things 'in the World, God and Religion, good for nothing. *idid. pag.* 19.

'True Chriſtianity is not noly the beſt, but the beſt natured 'Inſtitution in the World; and ſo far as any Church is de-'parted from good Nature, and become Cruel and Barbarous, 'ſo far it is degenerated from Chriſtianity. *idid. pag.* 30.

Thus far *Dr Tillotſon*, who, to be ſure, deſerves not to be thought the leaſt Eminent in the preſent Church of *England*. Let us hear what Doctor *Burnet* ſays to it.

'Men are not Maſters of their own Perſwaſions, and can-'not change their thoughts as they pleaſe; he that believes 'any thing concerning Religion, *cannot turn as the Prince com-'mands him, or accomodate himſelf to the Law or his perſent In-'tereſts*, unleſs he arrive at that pitch of *Atheiſm*, as to look 'on Religion only as a matter of Policy, and an Engine for ci-'vil Government; *Dr Burnet's Hiſtory of the Rights of Princes*, &c. in his Preface, pag. 49.

'Tis to this Doctor's pains ſhe ows the very Hiſtory of her Reformation, and as by it he has perpetuated his Name with hers, certainly he muſt have Credit with her, or we can deſerve none with any body elſe, for no man could well go fur-ther to oblige her.

Let me here bring in a lay Member of the Church of *Eng-land*, Sir *Robert Pointz*, in his vindication of *Monarchy*, who yeilds us an excellent Teſtimony to the matter in hand, 'The 'Sword *nvaileth little* with the Souls of Men, unleſs to *deſtroy* 'them.

'them together with their Bodies, and to make men *desperate*, 'or *dissemblers* in Religion, and when they find opportunity 'to fall into *Rebellion*, as there are many Examples. *p.* 27.

'In the Ancient Times of Christianity, such means were 'not used as might *make Hereticks and Schismaticks more obsti-* 'nate than docible, *through the preposterous proceedings of the* 'Magistrates and Ministers of Justice in the Execution of 'Penal Laws, used rather as *Snares* for gaining of Money and 'Pecuniary Mulcts impos'd, rather as *Prices* set upon Offen-'ces, than as Punishments for the Reformation of Manners, *ibid. pag.* 28.

'The *Ancient Christians* were forbidden by the *Imperial* 'Law, as also by the Laws of other Christian L. 6. Col. de Paganis. 'Nations, under a great Penalty to *meddle with* 'the Goods of the Jews or Pagans living peaceably *ibid. pag.* 29.

'For, the Goods of the *Jews*, although Enemies to the 'Christian Religion, *cannot for the cause of Religion come* 'by Escheat unto Christian Princes, under whom they live. *ibid. pag.* 29.

'It is truly said, that Peace, a Messenger whereof, an *Angel* 'hath been chosen to be, *is scarce ever established by the Sword*; 'and the *Gospel*, the blessed Peace, cannot be published by 'the *Sound of the Cannon*; neither the *Sacred Word* be con-'veyed unto us by the *impious hands of Souldiers*; neither *Tran-'quility* be brought to the Persons and Consciences of Men, 'by that which bringeth Ruin unto Nations. ibid. pag. 30.

He has said much in a little, the Talent and Honour of Men truly great. I give this still to the Church of *Englands* Principles, which yet makes it harder for her to justifie her Practice in her use of Power. But let us hear a King speak, and one the Church of *England* is bound to hear by many Obligations.

King

King *Charles* the First, out of his *tender* and *princely* ſence of the *ſad* and *bleeding Condition* of the Kingdom, and his unwearied Deſires to apply ſuch *Remedies*, as by the bleſſing of Almighty God, might ſettle it in Peace; by the Advice of his Lords and Commons of Parliament Aſſembled at *Oxford*, propounded and deſired, that all the Members of both Houſes might ſecurely meet in a full and free Convention of Parliament, there to *treat*, *conſult* and *agree* upon ſuch *things*, as may *conduce* to the *maintenance* and *defence* of the Reformed Proteſtant Religion, with due conſideration to all *juſt* and *reaſonable eaſe to tender Conſciences*. The Kings Meſſage of a Treaty, *March* 3. 1643. from *Oxford*, Superſcribed to the Lords and Commons of Parliament aſſembled at *Weſtminſter*.

In the Kings Twentieth Meſſage for Peace, *January* 29. 1645. he has theſe Words, *That by the Liberty offered in his Meſſage of the* 5*th. preſent, for the eaſe of their* Conſciences *who will not* Communicate *in the Service already eſtabliſhed by Act of Parliament in this Kingdom, He intends that all other Proteſtants behaving themſelves peaceable in and towards the civil Government, ſhall have the* **free Exercise** *of their* Religion *according to their* own way.

In the Thirty third Meſſage for Peace, *November* 17. 1647. there are theſe Words, *His Majeſty conſidering the great preſent* Diſtempers *concerning* Church Diſcipline, *and that the* Preſbyterian Government *is now in practice, his Majeſty to eſchew* Confuſion, *as much as may be, and for the ſatisfaction of his two Houſes, is content that the ſaid Government be legally permitted to ſtand in the ſame Condition it now is, for three Years; provided, that his Majeſty and thoſe of his Judgment (or any other who cannot in* Conſcience *ſubmit thereunto) be not obliged to comply with the Presbyterian Government, but have* **free Practice** *of their own Profeſſion without receiving any Prejudice thereby.* From the Iſle of *Wight*.

In his Declaration to all his People, *January* 18. 1645. from *Carisbrook* Caſtle, after the Votes of no Addreſs, He ſays, *I have ſacrificed to my two Houſes of Parliament, for the Peace of the Kingdom, all, but what is much more dear to me then my Life, my* Conſcience *and my* Honour.

In his Letter to the Lords, Gentlemen and Committee of the Scotch Parliament, together with the Officers of the Army, *July* 3. 1648. from *Carisbrook* Caſtle.—— *As the beſt foundation of* Loyalty *is* Chriſtianity, *ſo true* Chriſtianity *is perfect* Loyalty.

VI. ΕΙΚΩΝ ΒΑΞΙΑ Upon his Majeſties retirement from *Weſtminſter.*——*Sure it ceaſes to be Counſel, when not* Reaſon *is uſed, as to Men to* Perſwade, *but* Force *and* Terror *as to Beaſts, to* drive *and* compel *men to whatever tumultary Patrons ſhall project. He deſerves to be a* Slave *without Pity or Redemption, that is content to have his Rational* Soveraignty *of his* Soul, *and* Liberty *of his* Will *and* Words *ſo captivated.*—— Again, ibid. *Sure that Man cannot be blameable to God or Man, who ſeriouſly indeavours to* ſee *the beſt* reaſon *of* things, *and* faithfully *follows what he takes for* reaſon; *the* uprightneſs *of his* Intentions *will excuſe the poſſible failings of his* Underſtanding. —Again, ibid. *I know no Reſolutions more worthy a* Chriſtian King, *then to prefer his* Conſcience *before his* Kingdoms.

XII. Upon the Rebellion and Troubles in *Ireland,*——*Some kind of Zeal counts all* merciful Moderation Lukewarmneſs, *and had rather be* Cruel *than accounted* Cold, *and is not ſeldom more greedy to kill the Bear for her Skin, than for any harm he hath done.*—*ibid,* **O my God, thou ſeeſt how much Cruelty among Chriſtians is acted under the colour of Religion, as if we could not be Chriſtians unleſs we Crucifie one another.**

XIII. Upon the calling the *Scots* and their coming.——*Sure in matters of* Religion *thoſe* Truth's *gain moſt on mens* Judg-

ments

ments *and* Conſciences *which are leaſt urged with* **Secular** Violence, *which weakens Truth with Prejudices; and is unreaſonable to be uſed, till ſuch means of rational Conviction hath been appli'd, as leaving no excuſe for Ignorance condemns mens Obſtinacy to deſerv'd Penalties.--Violent Motions are neither* **Manly, Chriſtian** *nor* **Loyal.--The proper Engine of Faction is Force**; *the Arbitrator of* Beaſts, *not of* reaſonable Men, *much leſs of* humble Chriſtians *and* loyal Subjects, *in matters of Religion.*

XIV. Upon the Covenant.—— *Religion requires* Charity *and* Candor *to others of different Opinions.— Nothing Violent and Injurious can be Religious.*

XV. Upon the many Jealouſies raiſed, and Scandals caſt upon the King to ſtir up the People againſt him.—— *In point of true Conſcientious Tenderneſs (attended with Humility and Meekneſs, not with proud or arrogant Activity, which ſeeks to hatch every egge of indifferent Opinion to Faction or Schiſm) I have oft declared how little I deſire my* Laws *and* Scepter *ſhould intrench over Gods Soveraignty,* **which is the only King of mens Conſciences.**

XXVII. To the Prince of *Wales.—Take heed of abetting to any Factions; your* **partial** *adhereing to any one Side gains you not ſo great Advantages in ſome Mens Hearts (who are* prone *to be of their Kings Religion) as it looſeth you in others, who think themſelves, and their Profeſſion, firſt deſpiſed, then perſecuted by you.——My Counſel and Charge to you is, That you ſeriouſly conſider the former real or objected Miſcarriages, which might occaſion my Troubles, that you may avoid them.— A Charitable* **Connivance** *and Chriſtian* **Toleration**, *often diſſipates their Strength whom* rougher Oppoſition *fortifies.—— Always keep up* **Solid Piety** *and thoſe* **Fundamental** *Truths (which mend both Hearts and Lives of Men) with impartial Favour and Juſtice.—Your Prerogative is beſt ſhewed and exerciſed in* remitting *rather then exacting the rigour of the Law, there being nothing worſe than legal Tyranny.*

And

And as this was the Sence and Judgment of a King that Time and the greateſt Troubles had inform'd with a ſuperiour Judgment, (and which to be ſure highly juſtifies the meaſures that are now taken) So Dr. *Hudſon* his *Plain-dealing Chaplain* muſt not be forgotten by us on this occaſion, who took the freedom to tell his Royal Maſter, *That he lookt upon the Calamities he laboured under, to be the hand of God upon him, for not having given God his due over Conſcience.*

One can eaſily imagin this to be Reformation Language, and then it is not hard to think how low that Church muſt be fallen, that from ſo free and excellent a Principle, is come to make, execute and uphold *Penal Laws* for Religion, againſt her Conſcientious Neighbours; but it is to be hoped, that like *Nebuchadnezzar's Image*, whoſe Feet was a mixture of *Iron* and *Clay*, and therefore could not ſtand for ever; Perſecution will not be able to mix ſo with the Seed of Men but that Humanity will overcome it, and Mankind one day be delivered from that Iron hard and fierce Nature.

I have done with my Church of *Englands* Evidences againſt Perſecution. And for the Judgment of all ſorts of Diſſenters in that Point, let their Practice have been what it will, nothing is clearer than that they diſallow of Perſecution, of which their daily Addreſſes of Thanks to the King, for his General Eaſe by his Excellent Declaration are an undoubted Proof.

Thus then we ſee it is evident, that it is not only the Duty of all Parties, as they would be thought Chriſtians, to Repeal *Penal Laws* for Religion, but upon a fair enquiry, we ſee it is the avowed Principle of every Party at one time or other that Conſcience ought not to be compel'd, nor Religion impos'd upon worldly Penalties. And ſo *I* come to the third and laſt part of this Diſcourſe.

PART III.

PART III.

It is the Intereſt of all Parties, and eſpecially the Church of England.

AS I take all Men to be unwillingly ſeparated from their Intereſts, and conſequently ought only to be ſought and diſcours'd in them, ſo it muſt be granted me on all hands, that Intereſts *change* as well as Times, and 'tis the Wiſdom of a Man to *obſerve* the Courſes, and *humor* the Motions of his Intereſt, as the beſt way to preſerve it. And leaſt any ill-natur'd or miſtaken Perſon ſhould call it temporizing, I make this early Proviſion; That I mean no immorral or corrupt complyance: A *Temporizing*, deſervedly baſe with Men of Vertue, and which in all times, my Practice as well as Judgment hath ſhown the laſt Averſion to. For upon the Principle I now go, and which I lay down, as common and granted in Reaſon and Fact with all Parties concern'd in this Diſcourſe, that Man, does not change, that *morrally* follows his Intereſt under all its Revolutions, becauſe to be true to his Intereſt is his firſt civil Principle. I premiſe this to introduce what I have to offer, with reſpect to the Intereſts to be now treated upon.

And firſt, I ſay, I take it to be the Intereſt of the Church of *England* to aboliſh the *Penal Laws, becauſe it never was her Intereſt to make them.* My reaſons for that Opinion are theſe. Firſt, they have been an Argument to invalidate the Sufferings of the Reformers, becauſe if it be unlawful to diſobey Government about matters of Religion they were in the wrong. And if they ſay, O but they were in Error that puniſh'd their Non-conformity; I anſwer, how can ſhe prove that ſhe is Infallibly in the Right? And if this cannot be done, ſhe com-

pels to an uncertainty upon the ſame terms. *Secondly*, She has overthrown the Principles upon which ſhe ſeparated from *Rome*. For if it be unlawful to plead Scripture and Conſcience to vindicate Diſſent from her Communion, it was unlawful for her upon the ſame Plea to diſſent from the Church of *Rome*, unleſs ſhe will ſay again, that ſhe was in the Right, but the other in the Wrong, and ſhe knows this is no Anſwer, but a begging of the Queſtion; for they that ſeparate from her, think themſelves as Serious, Devout, and as much in the Right as ſhe could do. If then *Conſcience* and *Scripture*, interpreted with the beſt *Light* ſhe had, were the ground of her Reformation, ſhe muſt allow the Liberty ſhe takes, *or ſhe eats her Words, and ſubverts her Foundation*; then which nothing can be more deſtructive to the Intereſt of any Beeing, Civil or Eccleſiaſtical. *Thirdly*, The *Penal Laws* have been the great *Make-bate* in the Kingdom from the beginning. For if I ſhould grant that ſhe had once been truly the Church of *England*, I mean, conſiſting of all the People of *England*, (which ſhe was not, for there were divers Parties diſſenting from the firſt of her eſtabliſhment) yet ſince it afterwards appear'd ſhe was but one Party tho the biggeſt, ſhe ought not to have made her Power more National than her Faith, nor her Faith ſo by the Force of her Temporal Authority. 'Tis true ſhe got the Magiſtrate of her ſide, but ſhe engaged him too far. For ſhe knew Chriſt did not leave *Cæſar Executor* to his laſt Will and Teſtament, and that that ſhould be the reaſon why ſhe did ſo, was none of the beſt *Ornaments* to her Reformation. That ſhe was but a Party, tho the biggeſt, by the Advantages that temporal Power brought her, I ſhall eaſily prove, but I will introduce it with a ſhort Account of our State-Reformation here in *England*.

Henry the Eighth, was a kind of *Hermophredite* in Religion, or in the Language of the times, a *Trimmer*; being a meddly of Papiſt

Papiſt and Proteſtant, and that part he acted to the Life, or to the Death rather; Sacrificing on the ſame Day Men of both Religions, becauſe one was not Proteſtant enough, and t'other Papiſt enough for him. In this time were ſome *Anabaptiſts*, for the diſtinction of Church of *England*, and *Calvaniſt* was not then known.

Edward the Sixth ſucceeded, a Prince that promiſed Vertues, that might more than ballance the Exceſſes of his Father, and yet by *Arch-Biſhop Cranmer*, was compelled to ſign a Warrant to Burn poor *Joan of Kent*, a famous Woman, but counted an Enthuſiaſt: But to prove what I ſaid of him, 'twas not without frequent Denials and Tears, and the Biſhop taking upon him to anſwer for it at Gods Judgment; of which I hope his Soul was diſcharged, tho his Body, by the ſame Law, ſuffered the ſame Puniſhment in the ſucceeding Reign. Thus even the *Proteſtants* begun with Blood for meer Religion, and taught the *Romaniſts*, in ſucceeding times, how to deal with them.

At this time the Controverſie grew warm between the Church of *England* and the *Calvaniſts*, that were the Abler Preachers and the Better Livers. The Biſhops being moſtly men of State, and ſome of them looking rather backward then forward, Witneſs the Difficulty the King had to get *Hooper* Conſecrated Biſhop, without Conformity to the reſerved Ceremonies.

Queen Mary came in, and ended the Quarrel at the Stake. Now *Ridly* and *Hooper* hug, and are the deareſt Brethren and beſt Friends in the World. *Hooper* keeps his Ground, and *Ridly* ſtoops with his Ceremonies to t'others further Reformation. But this Light and Union *flow'd* from their Perſecution: For thoſe abroad at *Frankford*, and other places were not upon ſo good Terms: Their Fewds grew ſo great that the one refuſed Communion with the other, many endeavours

were uſed to quench the Fire, but they were ineffectual; at beſt it lay under the *Aſhes* of their Affliction for another time; for no ſooner was *Queen Elizabeth* upon her Throne then they returned, and their Difference with them. They managed it civilly for a while, but Ambition in ſome, and Covetouſneſs in others on the one hand, and Diſcretion giving way to Reſentment on the other, they firſt ply the *Queen* and her Miniſters, and when that ended in favour of the *Men of Ceremony*, the others arraigned them before the firſt Reformers abroad, at *Geneva*, *Bazil*, *Zurich*, *&c.* The leading Prelates by their Letters, as Doctor *Burnet* lately tells us, in his Printed Relation of his Travels, clear themſelves to thoſe firſt Doctors of any ſuch Imputation, and lay all upon the Queen, who for Reaſons of State would not be brought to ſo Inceremonious a way of Worſhip as that of the *Calvaniſts*.

At this time there were *Papiſts*, *Proteſtants*, *Evangeliſts*, *Præciſians*, *Ubiquitiſts*, *Familiſts* or *Enthuſiaſts* and *Anabaptiſts* in *England*; when the very firſt Year of her Reign, a Law for *Uniformity in Worſhip and Diſcipline* was enacted, and more followed of the ſevereſt Nature, and ſometimes executed. Thus then we ſee that there never was ſuch a thing as a Church of *England* ſince the Days of *Popery*, that is, a Church of Communion containing all the People of the Kingdom, and ſo cannot be ſaid to be ſo much as a *Twin* of the Reformation; nevertheleſs ſhe got the Bleſſing of the Civil Magiſtrate. She made him great to be great by him: If She might be the *Church*, He ſhould be the *Head*. Much good may the *Bargain* do her. Now is the time for her to *ſtand* to her Principle. I never knew any body exceed their Bounds that were not *met with at laſt*. If we could eſcape Men, God we cannot, his Providence will overtake us, and find us out.

By

By all this then it appearing, that the Church of *England* was not the Nation, the Caſe is plain that the *Penal Laws* were a *Make-bate*, for they Sacrificed every ſort of People whoſe Conſciences differed from the Church of *England*; which firſt put the *Romaniſt* upon flattering Prerogative, and courting its Shelter from the wrath of thoſe Laws. The Addreſs could not be unpleaſant to Princes; and we ſee it was not; for *King James*, that came in with Invectives againſt Popery, entring the Liſt with the Learn'd of that Church, and charging her with all the Marks the *Revelation* gives to that of *Antichriſt*, grew at laſt ſo tame and eaſy towards the *Romaniſts*, that our own Story tells us of the Fears of the encreaſe of *Popery* in the latter Parliament of his Reign.

In *King Charles* the Firſt's time, no body can doubt of the Complaint, becauſe that was in great meaſure the drift of every Parliament, and at laſt one Reaſon of the War. On the other hand the *Severity* of the Biſhops againſt Men of their own Principles, and in the main, of their own Communion, either becauſe they were more zealous in Preaching, more followed of the People, or could not wear ſome odd Garment, and leſs, lead the Dance on a Lords Day at a Maypole, (the Relique of *Flora* the *Roman* Strumpet) or perhaps for rubbing upon the Ambition, Covetouſneſs and Lazineſs of the Dignified, and Ignorance and Looſneſs of the ordinary Clergy of the Church (of which I could produce Five hundred groſs Inſtances) I ſay theſe things breed bad Blood, and in part, gave beginnings to thoſe Animoſities, that at laſt broke forth, with ſome other Pretences into all thoſe National Troubles that agitated this poor Kingdom for Ten Years together, in which the Church of *England* became the greateſt Looſer, Her Clergy turn'd out, her Nobility and Gentry Sequeſtred, Decimated, Impriſoned, *&c.* And whatever ſhe is pleaſed to think, nothing is truer, then that her *Penal Laws*, and Conduct in the

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Star-Chamber, and *high Commiſſion Court* in matters of Religion, was her overthrow.

'Tis as evident, the ſame Humour ſince the Reſtoration of the late King, has had almoſt the ſame Effect. For nothing was grown ſo little and contemptible as the Church of *England* in this Kingdom ſhe now intitles her ſelf the Church of: Witneſs the Elections of the laſt three Parliaments before this, I know it may be ſaid the Perſons choſen were Church goers; I confeſs it, for the Law would have them ſo. But no body were more avers to the Politicks of the Clergy; inſomuch that the Parſon and the Pariſh almoſt every where divided upon the queſtion of their Election. In truth, it has been the *Favour* and *Countenence* of the Crown, and not her intrinſick Intereſt or Value, that has kept her up to this Day; elſe her *Penal Laws*, the *Bulwork* of the Church of *England*, by the ſame figure, that ſhe is one againſt Popery, had ſunk her long ſince.

I hope I may, by this time, conclude, without offence, that the *Penal Laws* have been a *Make-bate* in the great Family of the Kingdom, ſetting the Father againſt his Children, and Brethren againſt Brethren; not only giving the Empire to one, but endeavouring to extinguiſh the reſt, and that for this the Church of *England* has once paid a ſevere Reckoning. I apply it thus: Is it not her Intereſt to be careful ſhe does it not a ſecond time? ſhe has a fair Opportunity to prevent it, and keep her ſelf where ſhe is, that is the Publick *Religion* of the Country, with the real Maintenance of it; which is a plain preference to all the reſt. If ſhe hopes by her Averſion to a general Eaſe, to ſet up for a *Bulwork* againſt Popery, one Year will ſhow the trick, and mightily deceive her, and the Oppertunity will be loſt, and another Bargain driven, I dare aſſure her, mightily to her Diſadvantage. Violence and Tyranny are no natural Conſequences of Popery, for then they would

would follow every where, and in all places and times alike. But we ſee in twenty Governments in *Germany* there is none for Religion, nor was not for an Age in *France*, and in *Poland*, the Popiſh Cantons of *Switzerland*, *Venice*, *Lucca*, *Colonia*, *&c.* where that Religion is Dominant, the People enjoy their Ancient and Civil Rights a little more ſteadily than they have of late time done in ſome Proteſtant Countries nearer home, almoſt ever ſince the Reformation. Is this againſt Proteſtancy? No, but very much againſt Proteſtants, For had they been true to their Principles, we had been upon better Terms. So that the Reformation was not the Fault, but not keeping to it better than ſome have done; For whereas they were *Papiſts* that both obtain'd the *Great Charter* and *Charter of Foreſts*, and in the ſucceſſive Reigns of the Kings of their Religion, Induſtriouſly laboured the Confirmation of them, as the great *Text* of their Liberties and Properties, by above thirty other Laws; we find almoſt an equal Number to Deſtroy them, and but one made in their Favour ſince the Reformation, and that ſhrowdly againſt the will of the high Church-men too; I mean *the Petition of Right*, in the third Year of *Charles* the firſt. In ſhort, They deſire a legal Security with us, and we are afraid of it, leaſt it ſhould inſecure us; when nothing can do it ſo certainly as their Inſecurity, for Safety makes no Man Deſparate. And he that ſeeks eaſe by Law, therefore does it, becauſe he would not attempt it by Force. Are we afraid of their Power and yet provoke it? If this Jealouſie and Averſion prevail, it may drive her to a Bargain with the Kingdom for ſuch general Redemption of Property, as may deſolve our great Corporation of Conſcience, and then ſhe will think that half a Loaf had been better than no Bread, and that it had been more adviſable to have *parted* with *Penal Laws*, that only ſerv'd to dreſs her in Satyr, then have loſt all for keeping them; eſpecially, when it

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was but parting with *Spurs*, *Claws* and *Bills* that made her look more like a *Vulter* than a *Dove*, and a *Lion* than a *Lamb*.

But I proceed to my next Reaſon, why it is her Intereſt to Repeal thoſe *Penal Laws*, (tho a greater cannot be advanced to Men than *ſelf Preſervation*) and that is, *That ſhe elſe breaks with a King heartily inclin'd to preſerve her by any way that is not Perſecuting*, and whoſe Intereſt ſhe once perſu'd at all Adventures, when more than ſhe ſees was ſuggeſted to her by the Men of the Intereſt ſhe oppoſed in favour of his Claim. What then has befallen her, that ſhe changes the courſe ſhe took with ſuch reſolutions of perſeverance? for bringing him to the Crown with this Religion, could not be more her Duty to his Title, or her Intereſt to ſupport her own, than it is ſtill, to be fair with him. If ſhe ow'd the one to him and to Chriſtianity, ſhe is not leſs indebted to her ſelf the other. Does he ſeek to impoſe his own Religion upon her? By no means. There is no body would abhor the Attempt, or, at all Adventures, condemn it more than my ſelf. What then is the matter? why he deſires eaſe for his Religion, ſhe does not think fit to conſider him in this, (no not to the King ſhe brought with this Objection to the Crown) Certainly ſhe is much in the wrong, and ſhews her ſelf an ill Courtier (tho it was become her calling) firſt to give him Roaſt-meat, then beat him with the Spit. Is not this to quit thoſe high Principles of Loyalty and Chriſtianity ſhe valued her ſelf once upon, and what ſhe can, provoke the Miſchiefs ſhe fears? certainly this is dividing in Judgment from him that ſhe has ackowledged to be her *Eccleſiaſtical Head*.

My fifth Reaſon is, that as the making and executing the *Penal Laws* for Religion affects all the ſeveral Parties of Proteſtant Diſſenters as well as the Papiſts (the Judges in *Vaughan*'s time, and he at the Head of them, giving it as their Opinion,

nion, they were equally expoſed to thoſe Laws) and that are thereby naturally driven into an Intereſt with them; ſo it is at this time greatly the Prudence of the Church of *England* to repeal them, for byſo doing ſhe divides the Intereſt that ſelf Preſervation allows all Men to perſue, that are united by danger: And ſince ſhe is aſſured the *Papiſts* ſhall not have the leſs Eaſe in this King's time than if the Laws were Repeal'd, and that her Fears are not of the ſucceeding Raigns, how is their Repeal a great Inſecurity, eſpecially, when by that, ſhe draws into her Intereſt all the Proteſtant Diſſenters, that are abundantly more conſiderable than the *Papiſts*, and that are as unwilling that Popery ſhould be *National* as her ſelf. For if this be not granted, ſee what Reputation follows to the Church of *England*. She tells the King ſhe does not deſire his Friends ſhould be perſecuted, yet the forbearance muſt not be by *Declaration* to ſave the Government, nor by *Law* to ſave her; and without one of theſe Warrants, every civil Magiſtrate and Officer in *England* is Perjured that ſuffers them in that Liberty againſt Law. How can ſhe be ſincerely willing that ſhould be done, that ſhe is not willing ſhould be done *legally*?

But *Sixthly*, the Church of *England* does not know but they or ſome other Party may at one time or other prevail. It ſeems to me her Intereſt to ſet a good Example, and ſo to beſpeak eaſie Terms for her ſelf. I know of none intended, and believe no body but her ſelf can place her ſo low, yet if it were her unhappineſs, I think to have civil Property ſecur'd out of the Queſtion of Religion, and Conſtraint upon Conſcience prevented by a Glorious *Magna Charta for the liberty of it*, were not a thing of ill Conſequence to her Intereſt. Let us but conſider what other Princes did for their own Religion, within the laſt ſeven Raigns, when they came to the Crown, and we cannot think ſo ſoft and equal a thing as an impartial

Liberty of Conſcience, after all that has been ſaid of a Popiſh Succeſſor, an ordinary Caracter of a Prince, or a mean Aſſurance to us: This ought not to ſlip her Reflection. Beſides, there is ſome care due to Poſterity: Tho the preſent Members of her Communion may eſcape the Temptation, their Children may not: They may *change* the Religion of their Education, and Conſcientiouſly chuſe ſome other Communion. Would they ſubmit the *Fortunes* they leave them to the Rape of hungry *Courtiers, Biggots and indigent Informers*, or have their poor Poſterity *Impoveriſht, Baniſht* or *Executed* for Sober and Religious Diſſent? God knows into whoſe hands theſe Laws at laſt may fall, what Miſchief they may do, and to whom. Believe me, a King of the humor of Sr *J. K.* of the *Weſt*, or Sr *W. A.* of *Reading*, or Sr *R. B.* or Sr *S. S.* of *London*, would, with ſuch vouchers, quickly make a *Golgatha* of the Kingdom. If ſhe thinks her ſelf conſiderable in Number or Eſtate, ſhe will have the more to looſe. Let her not therefore eſtabliſh that in the Prejudice of others, that may in the hands of others turn to her Prejudice.

Laſtly, I would not have her miſs the advantage that is deſign'd her by thoſe that perhaps ſhe thinks worſt of. I dare ſay no body would willingly ſee the *Presbyterian* in her *Chair*, and yet that may happen to be the Conſequence of her Tenaciouſneſs in a little time. For if the Averſion her Sons promote by whole ſale againſt *Popery* ſhould prevail, the remains of it in her ſelf are not like to eſcape that Reformation: I mean, her *Epiſcopal Government*, and the *Ceremonies* of her Worſhip, for which ſhe has vext the moſt Conſciencious People of this Kingdom above an Age paſt. And the *Presbyterian* being a Rich, Induſtrious and Numerous Party, as well among the Nobility and Gentry, as Trading and Country People, I cannot ſee but the next Motion, naturally ſpeaking, is like to tend that way; for other Parties, however well eſteemed,

eſteemed may ſeem too great a ſtep of Reformation at once, and methinks ſhe has taſted enough of that *Regiment*, to be once wiſe, and keep the *Ballance* in her own Hands. And certain it is, that nothing will ſo effectually do this as the entreated Liberty of Conſcience; for then there will be four Parties of Diſſenters beſides her ſelf, to *Ballance* againſt any Deſigns that may *warp* or *byaſs* things to their Advancement. And that which ought to induce the Church of *England* not a little to haſten, as well as do the thing, is this; ſhe is now a ſort of National Church by *Power*, ſhe will then be the Publick Church by Concurrence of all Parties. Inſtead of Enemies to invade or undermine her, they that ſhould do it are made the Friends of her ſafety by the happineſs they enjoy through her complacency: And if any ſhould be ſo unnatural or ungrateful to her, the Intereſt of the reſt will oblige them to be her *Spys* and *Security* againſt the Ambition of any ſuch Party. I do heartily pray to God that he would *enlighten the Eyes of her Leaders*, and give them good Hearts too, that *Faction* may not prevail againſt Charity, in the name of Religion: And above all, that ſhe would not be proud of her Numbers, or ſtand off upon that Reflection; for that alone will quickly leſſen them in a Nation loving Freedom as much as this we live in; And what appears in the Town is an ill Glaſs to take a proſpect of the Country by: There are Pariſhes that have Fifteen Thouſand Souls in them and if two come to Church it is matter of Brag, tho half the reſt be ſown among the ſeveral diſſenting Congregations of their Judgment. I would not have her miſtaken, tho *Popery* be an Unpopular thing, 'tis as certain ſhe of a long time has not been Popular, and on that Principle never can be: And if ſhe ſhould Plow with that Heifer now, and gain a little by the Averſion to Popery; when it is diſcern'd that Popery does return to the civil Intereſt of the Kingdom they will quickly be

Friends. For beſides that we are the eaſieſt and beſt natur'd People in the World to be appeas'd, there are thoſe charms in Liberty and Property to Engliſh Nature that no endeavours can reſiſt or diſapoint. And can we reaſonably think the Romaniſts will be wanting in that, when they ſee it is their own (and perhaps their only) Intereſt to do ſo? Theſe are the Arguments which, I confeſs, have prevailed with me to importune the Church of *England* to yeild to the Repeal of all the Penal Statutes, and I ſhould be glad to ſee them either well refuted or ſubmitted to.

I ſhall now *Addreſs* my ſelf to thoſe of the *Roman Church*, and hope to make it appear it is their Intereſt to ſit down thankfully with the *Liberty of Conſcience* herein deſired, and that a *Toleration and no more*, is that which all *Romaniſts* ought to be ſatisfied with. My Reaſons are theſe. *Firſt*, The *Oppoſition* that Popery every where finds: For in nothing is the Kingdom ſo much of a mind as in this Averſion: 'Tis no news, and ſo may be the better ſaid and taken. I ſay then this *Unity*, this *Univerſality* and this *Viſibility* againſt Popery, make the attempt, for *more* then Liberty of Conſcience, too great and Dangerous. I believe there may be ſome poor *ſilly Biggots* that hope bigger, and talk further, but who can help that? there are weak People of all ſides, and they will be making a Pudder: But what's the *language of their true Intereſt*, the Infallible guide of the wiſer Men? *Safety* certainly; and that in ſucceeding Raigns to chuſe: And if ſo, their Steps muſt be modeſt, for they are Watcht and Number'd. And tho their Prudence ſhould ſubmit to their Zeal, both muſt yeild to Neceſſity, whether they like it or no. What they convert upon the Square, *Perſwaſion* I mean, is their own, and much good may it do them. But the fear is not of this, and for compelling the avers *Genius* of the Kingdom, *they have not the means*, what ever they would do if they had them:

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Which is my ſecond Reaſon. I ſay *they have not the Power*, and that is what we apprehend moſt. There are three things that prove this in my Opinion. Firſt, *their want of Hands*, next, *want of Time*, and laſtly, *their Inteſtine Diviſion*; which, whatever we think, is not inconſiderable. They are *few*, we muſt all agree, to the Kingdom, upon the beſt Computation that could be made. Out of eight Millions of People, they are not *Thirty thouſand*, and thoſe but thinly ſown up and down the Nation; by which it appears that the Diſproportion of the *natural* ſtrength is not leſs than two hundred and ſeventy Perſons to one. So that Popery in *England* is like a *Spirit without a Body*, or a General without an Army. It can hurt no more than Bullets without Powder, or a Sword and no Hand to uſe it. I dare ſay, there is not of that Communion, enough at once, to make all the Coal Fires in *London*, and yet we are apprehenſive they are able to conſume the whole Kingdom. I am ſtill more *afraid of her Fears* than of them; for tho they ſeem high, ſhe thinks their Religion in no Reign has appeared much lower.

O but they have the King of their Side, and he has the Executive Power in his Hands! True, and this I call the *Artificial* Strength of the Kingdom. But I ſay, firſt we have his Word to bind him. And tho ſome may think our Kings cannot be tyed by their People, certainly they may be tyed by themſelves. What if I don't look upon the Act of both Houſes to oblige the King, his own Conceſſion muſt; and that may be given in an Act of State I take the King to be as well obliged in Honour and Conſcience to what he promiſes his People in another Method, as if it had been by his Royal Aſſent in Parliament; for an honeſt mans Word is good every where, and why a Kings ſhould not I can't tell. 'Tis true, the Place differs and the Voice comes with greater Solemnity, but why it ſhould with greater Truth I know not. And if

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the *Church of England* will but be adviſed to give him the opportunity of keeping his repeated Word with her, and not deprive her ſelf of that advantage by Jealouſies and Diſtances that make her ſuſpected, and may force him into another Conduct, I cannot help believing that the King will not to a tittle let her feel the aſſurance and benefit of his Promiſes.

But next, *we have his Age for our Security*, which is the ſecond Proof, of the ſecond Reaſon, why the Papiſts ſhould look no farther then a *Toleration:* This is the want of time I mention'd. They have but *one Life in the Leaſe*, and 'tis out of their power to renew; and this Life has liv'd faſt too, and is got within ſeven of threeſcore; A greater Age then moſt of his Anceſtors ever attain'd. *Well, but he has an Army and many Officers of his own Religion.* And if it be ſo, what can it do? It may ſuppreſs an Inſurrection, but upon the attemps we fooliſhly fear, they were hardly a Breakfaſt to the Quarters they live in. For if they were together, all the confines or remote parts of the Nation would Riſe like Graſs upon them, and if diſperſed, to be ſure they have not ſtrength for ſuch an Attempt.

But if they are not ſufficient, there is a Potent Prince not far off can help the Deſign, who is not angry with Proteſtancy at home only. Suppoſe this, is there not as Potent *Naval* Powers to aſſiſt the Conſtitution of the Kingdom from ſuch Invaſions? yes, and Land ones too. And as the Proteſtant Governments have more Ships then the other, ſo an equal Land Force, when by ſuch attempts to make Popery univerſal, they are awaken'd to the uſe of them: But certainly we muſt be very ſilly to think the King ſhould ſuffer ſo great a ſhake to his own Intereſt as admitting an Army of Forraigners to enter his Kingdom on any pretence, muſt neceſſarily occaſion. Theſe *Bull-Beggers*, and *Raw-Heads* and *Bloody-Bones*, are the Malice of ſome, and Weakneſs of others. But time, that Informs Children,

Children, will tell the World the meaning of the Fright.

The third Proof of my ſecond Reaſon, is *the Inteſtine Diviſion among themſelves*. That Diviſion, weakens a great Body, and renders a ſmall one harmleſs, all will agree. Now that there is ſuch a thing as Diviſion among them is town talk The *Seculars* & *Regulars* have ever been two Intereſts all the Roman Church over, and they are not only ſo here, but the *Regulars* differ among themſelves. There is not a Coffee-Houſe in Town that does not freely tell us that the *Jeſuites* and *Benedictines* are at variance, that Count *Da Da* the Popes Nuncio, and Biſhop *Lyborn* Diſſent mightily from the Politicks of the firſt; Nay t'other Day the Story was that they had prevail'd Entirely over them. The Lords and Gentlemen of her Communion have as warmly conteſted about the lengths they ought to go, *Moderation* ſeems to be the concluſion. Together they are *little*, and can do little; and divided, they are Contemptible inſtead of Terrible.

Laſtly, the *Roman Church* ought to be diſcreet, and think of nothing further then the entreated general Eaſe, becauſe it would be an extream that muſt beget another in the ſucceeding Raign. For as I can never think her ſo weak as well as baſe, that after all her Arguments for the *Jus divinum* of Succeſſion, ſhe ſhould, in the Face of the World, attempt to violate it in the wrong of One of another Perſwaſion, (for that were an eternal loſs of her with Mankind) So if ſhe does not, and yet is Extravagant, ſhe only riſes higher to fall lower then all others in another Raign. This were provoking their own Ruin. And to ſay true, either way would, as the ſecond Letter has it, diſcredit her for ever and make true Prophets of thoſe they had taken ſuch pains to prove falſe Witneſſes. And ſuppoſing her to reckon upon the juſt Succeſſion, nothing can recommend her, or continue her happineſs in a Raign of another Judgment, but this Libery

berty equally maintained, that other Perſwaſions, more numerous, for that reaſon as well as for their own ſakes, are obliged to inſure her. Here the Foundation is broad and ſtrong, and what is built upon it, has the looks of long Life. The Indenture will at leaſt be, *quint-pertite*, and Parties are not ſo mortal as Men. And as this joyns, ſo it preſerves Intereſt intire, which amounts to a *Religious Amity* and a *Civil Unity* at the worſt.

Upon the whole matter, I adviſe the Members of the *Roman Communion* in this Kingdom, to be moderate, 'tis their Duty and it belongs to all Men to ſee it and feel it from them, and it behoves them mightily they would; for the firſt part of this Diſcourſe belongs to their *Hopes*, as well as to the Church of *Englands Fears*, viz. the *Duty and Spirit of Chriſtianity*. Next, let them do *good Offices* between the King and his excellent Children, for as that will be well taken by ſo affectionate a Father, ſo it gives the lie to their Enemies Suggeſtions, and recommends them to the Grace and Favour of the Succeſſors. And having ſaid this, I have ſaid all that belongs to them in particular. There is left only my Addreſs to the *Proteſtant Diſſenters* and a general Concluſion to finiſh this Diſcourſe.

Your Caſe that are called *Proteſtant Diſſenters*, differs mightily from that of the *Church of England and Rome*. For the firſt have the *Laws* for her, the laſt the *Prince*. Thoſe Laws are *againſt* you, and ſhe is not willing they ſhould be Repeal'd: The Prince offers to be kind to you if you pleaſe; Your Intereſt, in this Conjuncture, is the *Queſtion*. I think none ought to be made, that it is the *Liberty of Conſcience*, deſired, becauſe you have much more need of it, having neither Laws nor Prince of your ſide, nor a Succeſſor of any of your Perſwaſions. The Fears of Popery I know reach you; but it is to be remembered alſo, that if the Laws are not Repeal'd, there

there wants no new ones to Deſtroy you, of the Papiſts making; ſo that every fear you are taught to have of their Repeal, is againſt your ſelves. Suppoſe your Apprehenſions well grounded, you can but be Deſtroy'd; Which is moſt comfortable for you to ſuffer by Law or without it? The Church of *England, by her Penal Laws, and the Doctrine of Headſhip*, has Armed that Religion (as it falls out) to Deſtroy you. Nay, has made it a Duty in the King to do it, from which (ſays ſhe) nothing but an Act of Parliament can abſolve him, & that ſhe is not willing to allow. And is it not as reaſonable that you ſhould ſeek their Repeal, that if you ſuffer from the Papiſts, It may be without human Law, as well as againſt Chriſts Law, as for the Church of *England* to keep them in force, becauſe if ſhe ſuffers, it ſhall be againſt the Laws made to uphold her? For not repealing them, brings you an inevitable miſchief, and her, at moſt, but an uncertain ſafety; tho 'tis certain, ſhe at the ſame time will Sacrifice you to it. And yet if I were in her caſe, it would pleaſe me better to remove Laws that might reproach me, and ſtop my Mouth when turn'd againſt me, and be content, that if I Suffer for my Religion, it is againſt the Law of *God*, *Chriſtianity* and the *Fundamentals* of the old and true Civil Government of my Country, before ſuch Laws helpt to ſpoil it. In ſhort, you muſt either *go to Church*, or *Meet*, or *let fall your Worſhipping of God* in the way you believe. If the firſt, you are *Hypocrites*, and give away the Cauſe, and reproach your dead Brethrens Sincerity, and gratifie the old accuſation of *Schiſm*, *Ambition*, *&c.* and finally looſe the Hope and Reward of all your Sufferings. If the ſecond, *viz.* that you *Meet againſt Law*, you run into the Mouth of the Government, whoſe Teeth are to meet in you and Deſtroy you, *as by Law eſtabliſhed*,. If the laſt, you deny your Faith, over-throw your own Arguments, fall away from the Apoſtolical Doctrine of

assembling together, and so must fall into the Hands of God, and under the troubles of your own Consciences and woundings of his Spirit, of which 'tis said, *who can bear them.* So that nothing is plainer then that *Protestant Dissenters* are not oblig'd to govern themselves after *such Church of England Measures*, supposing her Fears and Jealousies better Bottom'd then they are: For they are neither in this Kings time in the same Condition, with her if the Penal Laws remain in force, nor like to be so, if she can help it, in the next Raign, if they are not Repeal'd in this; so that they are to be certainly Persecuted now, in hopes of an uncertain Liberty then. Uncertain both whether it will be in her Power, and whether she will do it if it be. The *Language* of *Fear* and *Assurance* are two things, *Affliction* promises what *Prosperity* rarely performs. Of this the Promises made to induce the late Kings Restoration, and the cancelling of the former Declaration, and what followed upon both are a plain proof. And tho the last *Westminster Parliament* enclin'd to it; no body so much oppos'd it as the *Clergy*, and the most Zealous Sons of that Church: And if they could or would not then see it to be reasonable, I can't see why one should trust to People so selfish and short sighted. But if she will stoop to all those Dissenting Interests that are Protestant, it must either be by a *comprehension*, and then she must part with her *Bishops*, her *Common-Prayer*, her *Ceremonies*, and this it self is but *Presbyterian*; (and she must go lower yet, if she will comprehend the rest) or, if not, she must Persecute or give this *Liberty of Conscience* at last; which, that she will ever yeild to uncompel'd, and at a time too, when there is none to do it, while she refuses it under her present pressing Circumstances, I confess I cannot apprehend. But there is yet one Argument that can never fail to oblige your compliance with the General Ease entreated; *viz. That the Penal Laws are against our great Law*

of

of Property, and ſo void in themſelves. This has been the Language of every *Apology*, and that which, to ſay true, is not to be anſwer'd: How then can you decline to help their Repeal, that in *Conſcience*, *Reaſon* and *Law* you think void in their own Nature?

Laſtly, There is nothing that can put you in a Condition to help your ſelves or the Church of *England* againſt the *Domination* of *Popery*, but that which ſhe weakly thinks the way to hurt you both, *viz. The Repeal of the Penal Laws.* For as you are, you are *tyed* Hand and Foot, you are not your own men, you can neither ſerve her nor your ſelves, you are faſt in the Stocks of her Laws, and the courſe ſhe would have you take, is to turn *Martyrs* under them to ſuppo·t them. If you like the *Bargain* you are the beſt natur'd People in the World, and ſomething more. And ſince Begging is in Faſhion, I ſhould deſire no other *Boon*; for upon ſo plain a loſs of your Wits, your Eſtates will of courſe fall a ſtray to the Government, ſo that without the help of a Penal Law, you make an admirable Prize.

I have no mind to end ſo pleaſantly with you. I have a ſincere and Chriſtian regard to you and yours. *Be not Couzn'd, nor Captious, at this Juncture.* I know ſome of you are told, if you loſe this Liberty, *you Introduce Idolatry*, and for Conſcience ſake you cannot do it. But that's a pure miſtake, and improv'd, I fear, by thoſe that know it is ſo, which makes it the worſe; for it is not Introducing Idolatry (taking for granted that Popery is ſo) but ſaving the People from being Deſtroy'd that profeſs that Religion. If *Chriſt*, and his *Apoſtles* had taken this courſe with the World, they muſt have *Killed* them inſtead of *Converting* them. 'Tis your miſtake to think the *Jewiſh* rigorous Conſtitution is adequate to the *Chriſtian* Diſpenſation; by no means: That one Conceit of *Judaiſing Chriſtianity* in our Politicks, has fill'd the World with Miſery,

of which this poor Kingdom has had its ſhare. *Idolators* are to be *Enlighten'd* and *Perſwaded*, as St. *Paul* did the *Athenians* and *Romans*, and not *knock on the Head*, which mends no body. And to ſay a Chriſtian Magiſtrate is to do that, that a Chriſtian can't do, is ridiculous; unleſs like the *Biſhop of Munſter*, who goes like a Biſhop one part of the Day, and a Souldier the other, he is to be *a Chriſtian in the Morning and a Magiſtrate in the Afternoon.* Beſides, 'tis one thing to enact a Religion National, and compel Obedience to it (which would make this Caſe abominable indeed) and another thing to take off unchriſtian Penalties for the ſake of ſuch miſtakes, ſince that is to give them Power to hurt others, and this only to ſave you from being hurt for meer Religion.

To conclude my Addreſs to you, of all People, it would look the moſt diſingenious in you, and give you an Aire, the leaſt Senſible, Charitable and Chriſtian not to endeavour ſuch an Eaſe that have ſo much wanted it, and ſo often and ſo earneſtly preſſed it, even to Clamour. But that you ſhould do it for their Sakes who have uſed you ſo, and that the Inſtruments of their Cruelty, *the Penal Laws*, ſhould from a common Grievance become a Darling to any among you, will be ſuch a Reproach to your Underſtandings and Conſciences, that no Time or Argument can wipe off, and which I beſeech God and You to prevent.

The Concluſion.

I Shall conclude with one Argument, that equally concerns you all, and that is this; you claim the Caracter of *Engliſh Men*. Now to be an *Engliſh Man*, in the ſence of the Government, is to be a *Freeman*, whether *Lord* or *Commoner*, to hold his

his Liberty and Poſſeſſions *by Laws of his own conſenting unto*, and not to forfeit them upon Facts made Faults, by Humour, Faction or Partial Intereſt prevailing in the Governing part againſt the Conſtitution of the Kingdom; but for Faults only, that are ſuch in the nature of civil Government; to wit, *Breaches of thoſe Laws that are made by the whole, in perſuance of common Right, for the good of the whole.*

This regard muſt at no time be neglected, or violated towards any one Intereſt; for the moment we concede to ſuch a Breach upon our General Liberty, be it from an averſion we carry to the Principles of thoſe we expoſe, or ſome little ſiniſter and temporary Benefit of our own, we Sacrifice our ſelves in the prejudices we draw upon others, or ſuffer them to fall under; for our Intereſt in this reſpect is common. If then as *Engliſh men*, we are as mutually intereſted in the inviolable conſervation of each others Civil Rights, as men embark'd in the ſame Veſſel are to ſave the Ship they are in for their own ſakes, we ought to Watch, Serve and Secure the Intereſt of one another, becauſe it is our own to do ſo; and not by any means endure that to be done to pleaſe ſome narrow regard of any one Party, *which may be drawn in Example at ſome other turn of Power to our own utter Ruin.*

Had this Honeſt, Juſt, Wiſe and Engliſh Conſideration prevailed with our Anceſtors of all Opinions from the days of *Richard the ſecond*, there had been leſs *Blood*, *Impriſonment*, *Plunder*, *Beggery* for the Government of this Kingdom to anſwer for. Shall I ſpeak within our own knowledge, and that without Offence, there has been Ruin'd, ſince the late Kings Reſtoration, above **Fifteen Thouſand Families**, and more then **Five Thouſand Perſons** Dead under Bonds for matters of *meer Conſcience* to God: But who hath laid it to Heart? It is high time now we ſhould, eſpecially when our King, with ſo much Grace and Goodneſs leads us the way.

I beseech you all, if you have any Reverence towards God, any Value for the Excellent Constitution of this Kingdom, any Tenderness for your Posterity, any Love for your Selves, you would embrace this happy Conjuncture, and persue a common Expedient; That since we cannot agree to meet in one Profession of Religion, we may entirely do it in this common civil Interest where we are all equally engaged; and therefore we ought for our own sakes to seek one an others Security, that if we cannot be the Better, we may not be the Worse for our Perswasions, in things, that bear no relation to them, and in which, it is impossible we should Suffer, and the Government escape that is so much concern'd in the civil Support and Prosperity of every Party and Person that belongs to it.

Let us not therefore uphold *Penal Laws* against any of our Religious Perswasions, nor make *Tests* out of each others Faiths, to exclude one another our civil Rights; for by the same Reason that denying *Transubstantiation*, is made One to exclude a *Papist*, to own it, may be made one to exclude a *Church of England-man*, a *Presbyterian*, an *Independant*, a *Quaker*, and *Anabaptist*: For the Question is not who is in the right in Opinion, but whether he is not in Practice *in the wrong*, that for such an Opinion deprives his Neighbour of his common Right? Now 'tis certain there is not one of any *Party*, that would willingly have a *Test* made out of his Belief, to abridge him of his native Priviledge; and therefore neither the Opinion of *Transubstantiation* in the Papists, *Episcopacy* in the Church of *England* Man, *Free-will* in the Arminian, *Predestination* in the Presbyterian, *Perticular Churches* in the Independant, *Dipping of adult People* in the Anabaptist, nor *not-swearing* in the Quaker, ought to be made a *Test* of, to deprive him of the comforts of his Life, or render him incapable of the service of his Country, to which by a natural Obligation he is indebted, and from which, no Opinion

can

can discharge him, and for that Reason, much less should any other Party think it fit, or in their power to exclude him.

And indeed it were ridiculous to talk of giving Liberty of Conscience (which yet few have now the fore-head to oppose) and at the same time imagine those *Tests* that do exclude men that Service and Reward, ought to be continued: For though it does not immediately concern me, being neither *Officer* nor *Papist*, yet the Consequence is general, and every party, even the Church of *England*, will find her self concern'd upon reflection; For she cannot assure her self it may not come to be her turn.

But, Is it not an odd thing, that by leaving them on foot, every Body shall have Liberty of Conscience *but the Government*? for while a man is out of Office, he is *Test*-free, but the hour he is chosen to any station, be it in the *Legislation* or *Administration*, he must *wiredraw* his Conscience to hold it, or be excluded with the Brand of Dissent: And can this be equal or wise? Is this the way to employ men for the good of the Publick, where *Opinion prevails above vertue*, and *Abilities are submitted to the humour of a Party*; surely none can think this a *Cure* for Division, or that Animosities are like to be prevented by the only ways in the World that beget and heighten them. Nor is it possible that the ease that should be granted can continue long when the *Party* in whose favour they are not repeal'd, may thereby be enabled to turn the point of the sword again upon Dissenters.

I know *Holland* is given in Objection to this extent of freedom, where only *one Perswasion has the Government*, tho the rest their Liberty: But they don't consider, first, *how much more* Holland *is under the power of Necessity then we are*. Next, *That our Constitutions differ greatly*. For the first, 'tis plain, in the little compass they live in; the uncertainty and precariousness of the

the means of their ſubſiſtance: That as they are in more danger of Drowning, ſo neerer ruin by any Commotion in the State, then other Countries are. *Trading* is their Support, *This*, keeps them buſy, *That*, makes them Rich; and *Wealth*, naturally gives them *caution* of the diſorders that may ſpoil them of it. This makes the governing Party wary how they uſe their power, and the other Intereſts tender how they reſiſt it; for upon it, they have reaſon to fear a publick Deſolation; ſince *Holland* has not a natural and Domeſtick *Fund* to rely upon, or return to from ſuch national Diſorders.

The next Conſideration is as clear and cogent; our *Conſtitutions differ mightily:* For though they have the Name of a *Republick*, yet in their choice, in order to the Legiſlature they are much leſs free then we are: And ſince the *Freeholders* of all Parties in *England* may Elect, which in *Holland* they can no more do then they can be choſen, there is good reaſon why all may be elected to ſerve their King & Country here, that in *Holland* cannot be choſen or ſerve. And if our Power to chuſe be larger then theirs in *Holland*, we are certainly then a freer People, and ſo ought not to be confin'd, as they are about what Perſon it is that muſt be choſen: Methinks it bears no proportion, and therefore the Inſtance and Objection are improper to our purpoſe.

But it is ſaid by ſome, *That there cannot be two predominant Religions, and if the* Church of England *be not that*, Popery *by the Kings Favour is like to be ſo.* It is certain that *two predominant Religions*, would be two Uppermoſts at once, which is nonſence every where: But as I cannot ſee what need there is for the Church of *England* to loſe her Churhces or Revenues, ſo while ſhe has them, Believe me, ſhe is *Predominant* in the thing of the World that lies neareſt her Guides. But if I were to ſpeak my inclination, I cannot apprehend the neceſſity of any *Predominant* Religion, underſtanding the word with

with *Penal Laws* in the tale of it: The Miſchief of it, in a Country of ſo many powerful Intereſts as this, I can eaſily underſtand, having had the opertunity of ſeeing and feeling it too: And becauſe nothing can keep up the Ball of Vengance like ſuch a *Predominant* Religion, and that *Penal Laws* and *Teſts* are the means of the Domination, I, for that reaſon, think them fit to be Repeal'd, and let Engliſh Mankind ſay *AMEN*.

I do not love Quibling, but 'tis true, to a Lamentation, that there is little of the *power of Religion* ſeen where there is ſuch a predominant one, unleſs among thoſe it Domineers over.

I conclude, they that are ſo *Predominant*, and they that ſeek to be ſo (be they who they will) move by the ſame Spirit and Principle, and however differing their Pretentions and Ends may be, the odds are very little to me, by which it is I muſt certainly be Oppreſt.

Dare we then *do* (for once) *as we would be done by*, and ſhow the World, we are not Religious *without Juſtice*, nor Chriſtians *without Charity*: That *Falſe ſelf* ſhall not govern us againſt *True ſelf*; nor *oppertunity* make us Thieves, to our Neighbours for Gods ſake? the end of *Teſting* and *Perſecuting* under every Revolution of Government. If this we can find in our Hearts to do, and yet as Men, and as Chriſtians, as Engliſh Men, we do but do our Duty, let the *Penal Laws* and *Teſts* be Repeal'd; and in order to it, *Let us now take thoſe meaſures of men and things*, that may give our Wiſhes and Endeavours the beſt ſucceſs for the publick good, that our *Poſterity* may have more reaſon to bleſs our Memories for their *Freedom* and *Security*, then for their *Nature* and *Inheritance*.

FINIS